

JAINISM EXPLAINED

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MAHAVIRA'S TEACHINGS

Jainism is one of the world's oldest religions. Much of its early history is not known, or has come down to us in a form in which historical fact is difficult to distinguish from miraculous stories. However we do know that this ancient religion was passed on to us through the high spiritual genius of one of the greatest religious teachers of all time, Mahavira. We must be clear, from the start, that Mahavira was not the founder of Jainism. What he did was to bring together in a systematic form the beliefs and philosophy of his predecessors, preach them widely throughout his home country, and lay the foundations of an organized Jain 'church' with monks and nuns and lay people following his teachings. The social order which he created has endured to the present day.

Mahavira was not some imaginary being. He was a real man, and we know, with reasonable certainty, that his life on earth ended just over 2500 years ago, in 527 B.C. We know details of his life. He was born in 599 B.C. into a family of the ksatriya, or knightly, caste. His father, Siddhartha, was a prince or lord, and his mother, Trisala, also came from a noble family. His birthplace is believed to have been near the modern city of Patna, in Bihar in north-eastern India. Although generally referred to as Mahavira (which means 'great hero'), his original name was Vardhamana. Until his late twenties he doubtless led a life not very different from that of any other young man in his level of society.

Both his parents were followers of the religious teachings of Parsva, the 'fourfold teaching', chaturyama dharma, abstention from violence, theft, untruth and acquisitiveness. We should nowadays call them Jains. Parsva, who had lived some 250 years before Mahavira, is recognized as the twenty-third Tirthankara or prophet of Jainism. It was shortly after his parents' death that Vardhamana, or Mahavira, decided at the age of thirty to renounce a worldly life. He gave up all his possessions, even his clothes, and lived for the next twelve years a life of great hardship, training himself to endure the pains and discomforts of the body until he became indifferent to them. The wandering ascetic, seeking knowledge alone in the wilder places, or in company with fellow seekers for truth, was (and still is) an accepted figure on the edge of Indian society. The sixth century B.C. was an era of intellectual ferment, an exciting period for a young man of inquiring spirit, when various groups were searching beyond the bounds of the rather rigid religious orthodoxy of the time. The best-known individual, at least in historical perspective, was the Buddha, a near contemporary of Mahavira. Some of the earlier Western scholars who encountered Jainism did not distinguish it from Buddhism (for there are some similarities, as well as very marked differences) and even confused the persons of Mahavira and the Buddha. Mahavira persevered with this austere life style, marked by long spells of fasting and other penances, and by deep meditation. At last, during one period of meditation by the side of a river, he came to a comprehension of the whole nature and meaning of the universe. This total knowledge, omniscience, keval jnana; is very important to Jainism. Most of us have had the experience, at some time, of puzzling over something we do not quite understand, when, suddenly, almost as though a cloud clears, we get a flash of understanding and we see the solution to our problem. Can we imagine this flash of understanding spreading out, clearing the clouds over not just our small problem but all the problems of the universe, giving us an understanding of the whole nature and workings and meaning of the universe? This is what happened to Mahavira. And it can happen, and has happened, to other people as well. This total knowledge does not come easily: for Mahavira, as we have seen, it was the result of years of austerity and meditation. This was the fourth of

the five great events of Mahavira's life which are celebrated by Jains today: his conception, birth, renunciation, and now enlightenment. The fifth great event, nirvana or moksa came thirty years later.

During these thirty years Mahavira, strengthened by his knowledge, spread his message among the people. He spoke in the language of the region, Ardhamagadhi, not in the classical Sanskrit of the scholars, and the oldest Jain scriptures are preserved in that language. Some people, men and women, were inspired to give up all possessions and become monks and nuns. Others were unable to go that far but followed Mahavira's teachings without giving up their homes and families and work.

Mahavira taught a scientific explanation of the nature and meaning of life and a guide as to how we should behave to draw this real nature and meaning into our own life. We must start with three things. First, we must have RIGHT FAITH, we must believe in truth. Second, we must have the RIGHT KNOWLEDGE, we must study to understand what life is all about. Third, we must follow RIGHT CONDUCT, the conduct which our faith and knowledge show us to be correct. These are the 'three jewels', ratnatraya, of Jainism.

RIGHT FAITH is perhaps the hardest of all. Nobody can tell us what we can believe, but we can look at the message of Mahavira and believe that he really did know what he was talking about and that his message makes sense.

Mahavira's message contains the basis of RIGHT KNOWLEDGE. Life is a puzzle. Where did we come from before birth? Where do we go after death? Nobody's life is completely and totally happy, but why do some people have lives of great misery and others have much joy? Mahavira teaches us that this is not the result of the whims of some distant god. No, each one of us is what we have made ourselves by our actions in this life and in previous lives. Every individual (and not only humans, but animals and plants) is basically a pure spirit or soul (jiva is the Jain word for it) which is capable of complete knowledge and complete freedom. But by our actions and thoughts we have, as it were, covered this pure spirit with the gross material of karma which obscures our knowledge and limits our freedom and ties us down to one life after another. Although we may have a lot of happiness in life we also, all of us, have a great deal of unhappiness. We want to know the way in which we can get rid of the restrictions of karma and gain the state of complete knowledge and glorious freedom which is known as moksa or nirvana. Although this may be a very long, very slow process for most of us, over countless lives, Mahavira teaches us how to make a start in freeing ourselves from the restrictions and miseries of karma.

So we come to RIGHT CONDUCT. Strength of passions is the worst thing, passions of violence and desire and possession. The most important principle which runs through the whole of Mahavira's attitude of life is ahimsa. This is usually translated as 'non-violence', but it goes beyond that and really means the greatest possible kindness to all living things. This is the first and fundamental rule which we should try to follow, to get rid of violence in all our actions and even in our thoughts. Yes, in our thoughts as well, for violent thoughts can be potentially as harmful as violent deeds.

Mahavira's teachings, if faithfully followed, have two results. Firstly, they produce a better society for every creature to live in, and secondly, they enable the individual to improve his or her own inner feelings and character. So, following on from ahimsa, we are taught to be truthful and honest, to create both individuals and a society in which lies and theft, and general insecurity, are absent. Lies and theft are the result of our passions and possessiveness. True peace and harmony in society and in the individual are possible only if we can restrain our passions and desires. So Mahavira tells us to reduce our longing for the things of the world, for material possessions and for sexual activities. We can never have real peace of spirit so long as we are constantly seeking more and more possessions and pleasures.

These then are the five rules of conduct which Mahavira taught, non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, non-acquisition and control of sexual desires. It is a hard program and not everybody can follow it all at once. So Mahavira set up a society in which some people, monks and nuns, try to follow his program as far as is humanly possible. Others, ordinary lay people, men and women, do not give up their homes and jobs and families, but they try as far as possible in the circumstances of daily life to follow the five rules of conduct. While the monk or nun can take precautions to avoid harm even to the tiniest living creature, the rule of non-violence must

mean something less for ordinary people caught up in the ordinary business of our lives. A monk or nun can give up all possessions and seek no more: for most of us non-acquisition must mean trying to reduce our craving for possessions and the pleasures of the world. Monks and nuns can go very much further than married men and women in subduing their attachment to sex.

Mahavira taught his message for thirty years until his life on earth ended and he passed on to that state of complete freedom and bliss and peace which we call moksa. For most of us moksa is a very long way away. But he taught us how we can approach it ourselves by rules which lead to inner peace and harmony inside ourselves and outward peace and harmony in human society. He taught more than that, a democratic organization in the society which he set up, with all men and women playing their part and with no barriers of class or caste. He also taught tolerance and an appreciation that things can be seen from more points of view than one. Above all he taught that we ourselves produce our own fate by our own actions and emotions: we should not look outside for some god to praise or blame or ask for favors. When we honor Mahavira we do not ask him for present help, but we meditate on his example and teachings and seek to draw the real meaning of these into our own life and spirit.

This is the essence of Mahavira's teachings. Jainism is one of the world's oldest religions: the modern Jain may well see it as scientific, practical and fitted for the modern world.

THE EARLY CENTURIES OF JAINISM

Jainism is one of the oldest religions in the world, so old that we cannot with certainty date its beginnings. Jain tradition tells that Mahavira twenty-fourth and last of the Tirthankara or Prophets of the current cycle of the time. Some of the stories about them are truly amazing and non-Jains are rarely convinced. They are credited with enormously long spans of life and gigantic size and various other miraculous attributes. Leaving aside the stories (which are valuable if regarded as edifying stories), we have some historical details about some of them. The first Tirthankara was Rsabha and there are some accounts in non-Jain records which seem to fit in with the broad details of Jain tradition. He is recorded as a king of some ability who gave up his throne to become a wandering ascetic, going around naked (a symbol of total renunciation of worldly possessions) and frequently scorned or attacked by the ignorant. After Rsabha, Jain tradition gives us the names and some details of the next twenty Tirthankara. They were all men except perhaps the nineteenth, Malli, who is said to have been a woman (though this is not accepted by all Jains.) The twenty-second, Neminatha or Aristanemi (both names are found) is said to have been a relative and contemporary of the Hindu God hero Krishna.

With the twenty-third Tirthankara, Parsva, modern scholars find themselves on stronger ground. He is recorded as the son of the king of Varanasi (Benaras), the greatest holy city in India. He renounced the world at the age of thirty and after a fairly brief period of meditation and austerity he attained enlightenment. Thereafter he preached his message and gathered followers around him. He died, reputedly at the age of 100, passing to his final abode of bliss as a liberated soul. This was about 250 years before the time of Mahavira: Mahavira's parents were followers of the religion of Parsva. He taught four of the five great moral precepts of Jainism, non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing and non-acquisitiveness, omitting, for reasons which have been disputed, the vow of sexual restraint which was introduced or reintroduced by Mahavira. So with Parsva the Jain religion emerges clearly into the light of history, through darkness falls again in the period between the attainment of moksa or liberation by Parsva in the Parasanatha Hills (in Bihar) around 780 B.C.

We have looked at Mahavira's life in the first chapter. A great many people were impressed by Mahavira's personality and his teachings so that when his life on earth ended he left behind a large number of people (reputed to be as many as a third of a million) who were trying in various ways, in the vocation of Monk (sadhv) or nun (sadhvi) or as lay men (shravaka) and women (shravika), to follow the principles of Jainism. In his lifetime Mahavira appointed eleven leaders (ganadhara) among his followers. Only two of them, Indrabhuti Gautama and Sudharman, were alive at the time of Mahavira's moksa and it was to Sudharman that the

task fell of preserving and passing on the teachings of their master, and leading the community, when Mahavira was no longer with them. The order of nuns was headed by Chandana. She had been placed in this position by Mahavira: nuns have always had an important place in Jainism and it is said that the nuns under Chandana outnumbered the Jain monks of the time by more than two to one.

Mahavira and his early followers lived in north-eastern part of India, mainly in ancient kingdom of Magadh (in modern Bihar). Jain missionaries visited Kashmir and even Nepal but it was not until several centuries after Mahavira that Gujarat and the western part of India became the major center of Jainism as it is today. However Jainism spread southwards from Magadha into the kingdom of Kalinga (in modern Orissa) whose ruler became a convert. This king, Kharavela, lived in the second or third B.C. We learn from an inscription that he was a pious Jain and provided for monks but he appears to not to have seen military expeditions as incompatible with his religion. This area became an important center of Jainism in the earlier centuries, though we must not forget that we are speaking several hundred years after Mahavira. Much in Indian history of this period is not yet completely clear to historians and the spread of Jainism has to be pieced together from scattered, and sometimes cryptic, references. However, for the first centuries it is clear that the centers of this religion were in eastern India. There seem to have been Jains in Bengal from very early times.

The teachings of Jainism made a considerable impact amongst all classes of society. There is even a story that the great emperor Chandragupta Maurya, around 300 B.C., became a Jain monk at the end of his life. Chandragupta's grandson, Asoka, ruled over an empire which included all the sub-continent except the extreme south. As his capital was in the region of Magadha he was doubtless familiar with the Jains and they are mentioned in his records (though Asoka himself was a Buddhist). However, one of Asoka's grandsons was certainly a Jain and he did a lot to further the progress of his faith.

In a religion as ancient as Jainism it is natural that interesting controversies about details of the faith emerge. Whilst Jains are united on the fundamental questions, within that unity many different sects and schools of thought coexist in a tolerant manner. These may be the followers of one revered teacher or a group placing emphasis on certain particular teachings. The important division is between the Svetambara and the Digambara sections. 'Svetambara' means 'dressed in white' and 'Digambara' means 'dressed in the sky', a reference to the fact that Digambara monks renounce all worldly possessions, including clothes, whilst the monks of the Svetambara section wear two pieces of white cloth. The Svetambara (who form probably around two-thirds of all Jains, and the very large majority of those in the United Kingdom) are found in particular in Gujarat and the neighboring areas of western India. The Digambara are strongest in south India. The origins of the split are not clear. One account says that, probably some three hundred years B.C., there was a terrible famine in Bihar. The crops failed, people were dying of starvation and this went on for twelve years. Some of the Jain monks, led by Bhadrabahu, moved southwards away from the famine area. It is said that the monks who left were more rigorous in certain ways than those who stayed behind and when, after the famine was over, they came back it was found that the two groups had drifted apart in some ways. In particular, according to this account, before this time all Jain monks went naked but those who stayed in the north had now taken to wearing a single piece of cloth to cover themselves. Other accounts place the division much later, possibly as late as the second century A.D. Quite probably it was not a sudden split but a slow process. At any rate, to this day the Svetambara and the Digambara differ on certain minor matters, not only the clothing of monks but also such questions as whether a woman can achieve moksha (the Digambara say not until she is reborn as a man), whether Mahavira was married before he gave up the world, and some other points.

In these early centuries, of course, reading and writing were not as common as they are today, and religious teachings (and indeed all other literature, history, stories and songs) were preserved in the memory of people. Mahavira's closest followers must have committed to memory the things which he said in his preachments and after he left them the responsibility of passing on the teachings fell on the new leader of the community, Sudharman, whom we have mentioned above. For nearly two centuries the collected teachings were handed down by word of mouth. It seems wonderful to us today that a man could retain in his memory the fourteen Purva texts, each of them quite a lengthy work, which made up the basic part of the sacred literature of the Jains. But the Jain monks of those early centuries lived a much simpler life

than we do today, without the distractions of our complicated modern civilization. Moreover they doubtless did train their memories for the repetition of long texts. Even so it appears that memories were not infallible and only ten of the fourteen Purva texts were still known 200 years after Mahavira. They have now all been lost, though much of their teaching (which was said to go back in part to the time of Parsva) was preserved in other texts, like the twelve Anga texts, eleven of which survive to this day.

The last man who knew all the scriptures by heart was Bhadrabahu and he died 170 years after Mahavira. About that time, around 360 B.C., the Jains were concerned that the memory of the holy scriptures might get lost. It was a difficult time in parts of India with a long famine and the death or dispersal of many monks. Hence a great conference of monks was held at Pataliputra (now called Patna, in Bihar) when the contents of the sacred texts (those which had not been lost) were put in order. Not all Jains believe today that the original scriptures have survived. The Digambara in general feel that the original texts eventually disappeared from knowledge over a fairly long period of time. Some modern scholars believe that some re-editing of the texts must have taken place so that they are not exactly in the original form. Many centuries after the conference at Pataliputra another conference was held at Valabhi, around 460 A.D. when all the sacred scriptures were finally written down, the twelve Anga texts representing the oldest section, with a further thirty-four works which are recognize as rather later in time. There is no doubt that, in spite of some differences of opinion about it, the Jains still have today a collection of ancient religious literature which contains the noble teaching of Mahavira as it was followed two thousand and more years ago. For a very long time these scriptures were studied only by monks and learned men. The language in which they were compiled, called Ardhamagadhi, was once the language of ordinary people in Magadha so that the teachings of Mahavira (who preached in this language) could be understood by them. But Ardhamagadhi died out as a spoken language and only scholars could understand it (though most Jains today know at least some of the ancient prayers in the beautiful and solemn ancient tongue). In recent years, however, many of the Jain writings have been translated into modern Indian languages, as well as into English and other European languages, so that with little trouble we can obtain and read them today.

We have been talking about matters which cover many, many centuries of time. Generation after generation passed, of people much like ourselves, even though they lived two thousand and more years ago. They had the same hopes and fears, the same joys and sorrows. And like Jains everywhere today they had the teachings of Mahavira to guide and support them.

JAINISM IN INDIAN HISTORY

In the second chapter we traced the history of Jainism in its earlier centuries. The story is not complete for, even if we had much more space and time, historians are still only slowly unraveling the confused history of ancient India. In this chapter we shall sketch a few of the developments in Jainism in the history of India. Obviously we can only touch on this subject. One of the reasons why it is difficult to trace the history of Jainism quickly is that India for much of the past 2000 years was not a single state but a large number of small, and some large, states with shifting frontiers each with its own history.

The major event, of course, was the gradual extension of Jainism from its homelands in eastern India into the south, and then into western India, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Unfortunately we know little about how this actually happened. Doubtless Jain Monks, traveling as always on foot, crossed India and made converts in the lands they passed through. Probably Jain businessmen, then as now, took their faith to distant parts. Other travelers also might have helped. Certainly Jainism had reached Gujarat more than 2000 years ago.

From the early fourth century A.D. until around 600 A.D. northern India, down as far as modern Bombay, was under the control of the emperors of the Gupta dynasty. Doubtless the unified control facilitated contacts across India. In the Gupta period Gujarat seems to have become the most important center of Jainism in India if we are to judge from the fact that the great council, when the holy scriptures were finally put into writing around 460 A.D., was held at Valabhi in Gujarat. Some sixty or seventy years later Jain scriptures were read at a ceremony

of mourning for the death of the king's son even though the king himself was not a Jain. Apart from Gujarat, Jainism was well established in many parts of India by the Gupta period: it was certainly already present in Rajasthan by then.

An unusual account of India was given by a visitor from China who traveled there in the earlier seventh century A. D. He has many references to Jains and it does appear that, at least in the places which he visited, the Digambara were at that time the stronger section. However the Svetambara were beginning to increase in Gujarat and Rajasthan, particularly because they gained the support of the kings of Gujarat. Many great Jain scholars contributed to Jain learning as well as to many other subjects. One of the greatest was the famous Acharya Hemacandra from Gujarat (1089-1172 A.D.). The king of Gujarat, Kumarapala, was his staunch follower. Hemacandra wrote very widely on a range of scientific and literary subjects, commentaries on ancient texts, poetry, works on logic, yoga and grammar, and a lot more. He wrote a major work on the duties of both lay people and monks.

Large number of sects developed amongst the Svetambara from the seventh century A.D. onwards, traditionally they numbered eighty-four, though not many of them survive today. They certainly attest to the vitality of Jainism in these centuries, a golden age for the faith.

In south India, from the fifth century onwards for some seven hundred years, Jains also received the patronage of royalty and many kings favored them in one way or another. Great poets and writers flourished. Under royal patronage Jinasena wrote a great unfinished epic which was completed by his pupil Gunabhadra in the year 897 A.D. This long work includes much moral teaching on the duties of a Jain and is much respected by the Digambara scholars. In the south one of the great centers of Jainism was Sravana Belgola, noted for its colossal Jain image, still an important center of pilgrimage today, and in earlier times a center for Jain influence across the southern regions. Jainism flourished during this period with large numbers of adherents in all classes of society.

However Jainism began to lose ground eventually. The development of popular personal religious movements in Hinduism with a warm devotion to a god led many away from the religion of Mahavira. The Hindu followers of both Vishnu and Siva increased in numbers and the contest between the newly revived Hindu cults and the Jains became strong, then bitter and finally in some cases led to violence against the Jains. Although we must not overstress this (for Hinduism and Jainism have coexisted happily nearly always), Jainism in south India did suffer a decline from which it never recovered, at least to its earlier strength. Dedicated and faithful Jains continued to practice their religion with enthusiasm, as they do today, but their numbers were fewer.

In the north, too, Jainism lost ground. From the thirteenth century A.D. the Muslim conquests in north India affected Jains badly. At times Jain temples (and Hindu ones as well) suffered damage or destruction by the conquerors. At the same time there seems to have been a decline in religious fervor and practice. Numbers declined and Jainism became confined mainly to the merchant and business class. However, again we must not overstress the decline.; Jainism did decline in numbers, and at times in standards, Jains continued to produce great scholars and many devoted saints. Jains, as a pacific group in society, valued for financial and business acumen, enjoyed a fair measure of tolerance and, indeed, were not infrequently employed in important government positions. Temple building and the arts continued to flourish. In the sixteenth century the Mogul emperor Akbar, the greatest Mogul ruler, although a Muslim, had close contacts with a Jain monk Hirvijaya Suri. Akbar called Hirvijaya to his court in 1582 and the monk and the emperor had long conversations on questions of religion and philosophy. Inspired by these the emperor was moved to impose restrictions on the killing of animals in his domains and himself gave up his favorite sport of hunting.

While the Muslims dominated north and central India, in the south the great Hindu empire of Vijayanagar ruled from the early fourteenth century to the late sixteenth century A.D. Here the Jains were protected by the rulers and many took an important part in public life, in government and the army, as well as in finance, trade and learning. In view of the Jain insistence on non-violence, it may become as a surprise to some to learn that Jain laymen have sometimes been prepared to hold military positions. The question whether the rules of ahimsa, non-violence, permit the necessary defense of one's country is usually answered by the argument that a measure of necessary harm is unavoidable for the lay person, though of

course strictly precluded for the monk or nun. In all honesty, however, we may well question whether the military exploits of some Jain rulers in Indian history have not strayed beyond the bounds of unavoidable violence.

The building of temples and the installation of images has long been a tradition of Jainism but one development has been the emergence of a branch of the Svetambara Jains which does not accept the worship of images. The Sthanakvasi sect originated in the late seventeenth century, though its roots are traced back as far as 1394 in another group which rejected images. Although the majority of Jains adhere to the ancient rituals and images, the Sthanakvasi, who meet in plain meditation halls, have attracted many adherents and have produced many learned and pious members.

JAINISM ENTERS THE MODERN AGE

As has been mentioned, Jains declined in numbers after the medieval period. In some ways this strengthened Jainism for it produced tight-knit communities of Jains with common interests and a devotion to the faith reinforced by their closeness within the group. In the early nineteenth century we must speak of communities, rather than of a single Jain community, for within the wider structure of the Jain religion Jainism provided, and indeed still provides, for a number of sometimes overlapping allegiances. Besides the broad division between the Svetambara, strongest in western India, and the Digambara, mainly in the south, there is the Sthanakvasi sect (within the Svetambara division) which rejects the worship of images. The Terapanthi, an offshoot of the Sthanakvasi, dates from 1760 and has become a well-organized and active movement. The Svetambara, more than the Digambara, have always shown a tendency to form groupings around particular teachers and their successors. Allegiance to a particular temple often can run parallel to family or caste allegiance. We must be honest about the fact that, as in any live and active organization, religious or secular, differences of opinion can arise within the broad unity of the Jain faith.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries we can pick out certain mainstreams of development. With the growth of modern communications there has been a notable development of all-India federations of various sorts. Secondly, Jain scholarship, education and writing have broadened out at all levels, whether simple aids for children or learned editions of the sacred texts and university theses on Jain topics. Thirdly, Jains have become much more conscious of the wider public: without seeking to count heads of converts like many religions, Jains have become concerned to spread knowledge of the Jain religion and to encourage adherence to its principles. Parallel to this there has been a growing (though still small) interest by scholars and others in the West and by non-Jains in India. Lastly, for the first time in Jain history, Jainism has been carried to Africa, Europe and North America, where Jain communities have settled and flourished.

Jains have a long association with finance and commerce and many were well placed to play a leading role in the economic development of modern India. There was an influx to the big commercial and manufacturing centers of Bombay and Calcutta in the nineteenth century. Development was not without its traumas: when Jain businessmen first became involved in the cotton industry in Ahmedabad they were criticized by co-religionists fearful of the harm to tiny living beings implicit in the operation of the great new machines. The reputation of Jain businessmen for honesty and fair dealing, together with a simple way of life, stood them in good stead and many prospered exceedingly.

Prosperity reinforced the traditional Jain devotion to charitable causes. The building of temples, some of great beauty and richness like the great white marble edifice to the fifteenth Tirthankara erected in Ahmedabad in 1848 by a prominent businessman, went ahead in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Educational institutions have been endowed and publishing of religious works supported. Peculiarly Jain institutions, the refuges for sick animals are maintained. Generosity to Jain causes, by people of all income groups, is a major Jain characteristic, but generosity is not confined to Jain causes alone.

Let us now pick up a few, only a few, examples of the prominent people who have been particularly concerned with the promotion of Jain faith and principles over the past century.

In 1893, a 'World Parliament of Religions' was held in the United States and the organizer sought a Jain representative. The invitation went to Acharya Atmaramji but as a monk it was not possible for him to travel so the task of being the Acharya's representative and the first Jain to explain his religion to a major overseas gathering fell to Sri Virchand Gandhi, Honorary Secretary of the Jain Association of India. His lectures in the U.S.A. earned him a silver medal from the Parliament of Religions for his scholarly oratory. He received other honors and a philosophical society named after him was established. Going on to England he continued his lecturing (he gave 535 lectures in all). One of his students was Herbert Warren who became secretary of the Jain Literature Society founded with Virchand Gandhi's help. Herbert Warren wrote two successful books on Jainism explaining the subject in a straightforward up-to-date way. Virchand Gandhi died at the very early age of thirty-seven.

Another learned layman was Champat Ray Jain, a barrister by profession. Fluent in Hindi, Urdu and English, he studied the Christian and Muslim religions and claimed that their message was essentially the same as that of Jainism. He published a dozen books in the 1920s and '30s, including *The Key of Knowledge*, *Jain Law*, and *What is Jainism?* In his writings and lectures he explained religion in twentieth century terms, using the concepts of modern psychology and science.

Srimad Rajchandra is especially remembered as the spiritual mentor of Mahatma Gandhi. The Mahatma, though not himself a Jain, was deeply influenced by Jain doctrines, particularly non-violence. Rajchandra wrote many books, with emphasis on the soul and its purification. He died young but his work survives in a number of religious centers or foundations established by his followers.

The monastic order has known many who have made significant contributions to Jain learning and Jain religion in the past century. Acharya Vallabhvijay Suri was born in 1870 and lived to be 84. The shock of losing both his parents as a child turned him to spiritual quests and at the age of seventeen he became a monk as a disciple of the famous Atmaramji. It was the dying wish of his teacher that Vallabhvijay should devote himself to the establishment of educational institutions. It is for this work that he is especially remembered. In his long life he established schools and colleges. Mahavir Jain Vidhyalaya, founded under his guidance to provide university hostels and religious education, and help with higher education for poorer students, now has seven branches and has produced very many graduates. Acharya Vallabhvijay was a simple and effective preacher, free from sectarian bias, with a love for people of all faiths and a devotion to his native land and the cause of its independence.

The Terapanthi sect, which, like the Sthanakvasi from which it separated in the eighteenth century, does not worship images, has a single spiritual leader or Acharya. In 1936 his position passed to twenty-one year old Acharya Tulsi. It was an inspired choice, for this young man was to transform the Terapanthi. He has traveled to almost every part of India. He has shown particular concern for education and preaching, putting emphasis on study, research and writing by Terapanthi monks, and by nuns as well. The Jain Vishva Bharati which emerged from his work is an institution for higher education in the Jain field. The Anuvrata Movement which he initiated in 1949 works for moral uplift, honesty and a non-violent, non-exploitive society: some of its members are non-Jains. In 1980, he introduced another innovation with the initiation of the first of a new order of 'lay nuns' and 'lay monks', shramani and shramana. Whilst dedicated to the life of nuns and monks, they are dispensed from the prohibitions on traveling in vehicles and on eating with lay people (and cooking for, themselves if essential) as well as from certain toilet rules incumbent on the full-fledged mendicant.

KANJI SWAMI was originally a Sthanakvasi but after much searching found that the Digambara sect best answered his spiritual needs. He is known for his work on Kunda-Kunda, a great south Indian Jain writer probably of the third or the fourth century A.D. A movement which he started in 1934, which stresses inward thought rather than external ritual, attracted followers who hold him in great reverence.

Another distinguished scholar was Vijay Dharma Suri (1868- 1922) who wrote many books on Jain philosophy and ethics in Sanskrit, Gujarati and Hindi, edited texts and inscriptions, started an important series of published texts, the *Yashovijaya Jaina Granthamala* (named after the seventeenth-century scholar Yashovijaya), established schools and corresponded with many Indian and European scholars.

The list could go on for pages! Let us end by mentioning Ratnachandrajai Maharaj who completed in 1932 the publication of a four-volume dictionary of Ardhamagadhi, the language of the ancient Jain scriptures, with explanations in Sanskrit, Gujarati, Hindi and English.

One important development in recent decades has been the publication of good modern editions, often with translations into modern languages, of the sacred books of Jainism, thus making the scriptures, formerly restricted to monks, available to a wider public. Ray Dhanapati Simha Bahadur initiated the printing of Jain Agama texts in the 1880s. The Sacred Books of the Jains series, started by Kumar Devendra Prasad Jain, published from 1917 various Digambara texts with English translations and commentary. Baharatiya Jnanpith, of Varanasi, engages in research and publication, and a steady stream of publications comes

from the L.D. Institute of Indology in Ahmedabad. The L.D. Institute is building up an important Jain manuscript collection in original and microfilm. There is, in fact, a great deal of publishing in India in the Jain field, ranging from children's books to university theses on specialized topics, from commercial publishers as well as from Jain institutions. The quality is very varied: magnificent (and often expensive) books on Jain art or works of serious advanced scholarship can be seen alongside amateurish (but certainly sincere) little pamphlets. Periodicals of one sort and another have proliferated since 1857: over 120 titles can be counted, including in English the Jain Journal (Calcutta) and The Jain, trilingual in English, Gujarati and Hindi (published by Jain Samaj Europe). Five universities in India have professors of Jain studies and a new institution in Delhi may well become the major center in this field.

The challenge from both Muslim and Christian missionary effort towards the end of the nineteenth century was one factor behind the establishment of a number of nationwide Jain institutions, but they also enable Jains to face the challenges of the modern world in a united way. The All-India Digambara Jain Conference first met in 1893. A similar Svetambara organization dates from 1903 and a united meeting of 700 Svetambara monks was held in 1934 to reaffirm the traditional rules. The Sthanakvasi held their first national conference in 1906 and took an important step in 1952 when they recognized Atmaranji Sadadi as the single chief Acharya (religious leader) of the sect: his present successor is Acharya Anandarushi. A wider dimension was given to Jain unity with the formation in 1899 of the Jain Young Men's Association which became in 1910 the All-India Jain Association. In 1973 the 2500th anniversary of Mahavira's moksa was the occasion for widespread celebrations and marked the new resurgent spirit of Jainism. Emigration from India has led to Jain communities emerging in East Africa, Europe and North America. Jain temples have been set up in Mombassa and Nairobi, and the first in Europe will be in Leicester. In North America various Jain associations have come together in a single federation.

Western interest in Jainism is growing, though slowly. Much work has been done by Western scholars since Major Colin Mackenzie published his 'Account of the Jains' in the journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1807. The Germans were to become the most active in the field of Jain research. A landmark was the publication in 1884 of the first two volumes of Jain Sutras, translated into English by Hermann Jacobi. It would not be appropriate here to give a long catalogue of names, but it would include English, German, French, Italian and even Japanese scholars. Although good general accounts of the Jain religion have long been available in French and German, no such work by an English writer has been published except Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson's *The Heart of Jainism* (1915), a sympathetic book but colored by a strong Christian missionary outlook. At a more popular level, knowledge of Jainism and the Jains is filtering only very slowly into Western consciousness. Within the Jain community there is a desire to make the principles of Jainism known to a wider world and this cannot do anything but good.

There is no doubt that now, in the late twentieth century, Jainism is in a healthy state. The great pilgrimage centers are popular, religious practices and ceremonies attract large numbers, charity towards Jain cause is generous. Jainism has spread beyond the bounds of India and the ambitious Jain Center in Leicester is an example to all.

DOCTRINES OF JAINISM:

The Science of Religion (i)

Let us start with karma. (Do not be put off by the fact that some of these terms are not familiar in plain everyday English: every science has its own technical words, and the science of religion is no exception.) Karma just means actions, or deeds. When we talk about the 'law of karma' all we mean is that a person's physical and mental make-up and fortune in life can be traced back to the effects of his or her previous actions, in this, or an earlier, life. It is common sense really. If I eat too much I shall get fat (the effect of my actions). If I control my appetite then I shall not. If I do not control my desire for possessions then I shall get greedy and unpleasant. If I do not control my attitudes to other living creatures then I shall get violent and unpleasant. All these things add up: all my actions and thoughts help to make the sort of person I am. And they obviously have their effects on my position in life. It is true that in the short term violent or greedy or dishonest people often appear to succeed in life, to reach high positions, acquire wealth and live in comfort, even though they are feared or disliked by pleasanter, more honest people. But Jains look at the long term. They see that violence and greed and dishonesty build up conditions within the individual which are certain to have their effect eventually.

Every action, whether it is physical or mental, has its effect. The person who commits continual violence will find himself (or herself) becoming more and more bound up in the ways of violence, with a personality becoming more and more twisted and unpleasant. It may take two or three lifetimes, even more, for the effects really to show. But one cannot escape them. Of course good actions, kindness and non-violence and lack of greed equally have their (very different) effects on the individual's life and personality.

Not only outward actions count but also inward thoughts. A person who is subject to inward passions may perhaps be prevented by force of circumstances from giving outward expression to them. There is obviously no virtue in refraining from violence or acquisitiveness because you are prevented by circumstances you cannot control. Suppose that you want to injure a person and you attack an inanimate dummy, fully believing that it is that person. You may not be guilty by law, but morally you are as guilty as if you had not been mistaken. Of course, if you have violent or greedy thoughts and consciously manage to control them, you are less blameworthy. That is why, a few lines back, we said that every action, whether it is physical or mental, has its effect. Our condition in life is the result of the things we do and the things we think, of our actions and our attitudes.

Jainism is particularly concerned with ethics, with matters of right and wrong, with morality in its widest sense. This will be apparent to the reader of this small book. At this point let us remember that to the Jain the great ethical principles are five in number. Most important is non-violence, towards all living creatures. The other four are truthfulness, sexual restraint, not taking the property of others, and not seeking to accumulate excessive possessions.

Now the effects of karma appear over many lifetimes of any individual. We know that some people argue that when the death of a physical body occurs, that is the end of the individual. Frankly this does not seem very probable: is it likely that all the thoughts and feelings, the ideas and ideals, the love (and hate), that make up me, or you, suddenly stop when the body dies? Jains believe, as indeed do most Indian (and Western) religious thinkers, that the physical body is only a container for something much more important, for the real individual inside it. This real individual (Jains call it *jiva*, sometimes translated as 'soul' or 'self') leaves the body at death and finds another body, another container, in which it lives out another life. Naturally the *jiva*, which is the real personality of the individual, is still bound by the effects of its previous behavior, its karma. The condition of the *jiva*, as affected by its previous karma, will determine what sort of new life it will enter into. The effects of a violent and greedy life may be many lifetimes of misery before the individual has worked all the bad effects out of the system. Equally the individual whose personality has been shaped by good and loving behavior in past lives may now be leading a good and pleasant life.

It is very important to remember that every living thing, not only human beings, is basically a *jiva*. In the universe are countless myriads of *jiva*, whether contained in the simplest single-celled living creature or in complex beings with many senses and high intelligence like humans. From creatures so tiny that we cannot see them, to plants, birds and animals, all are *jiva*. And there are beings also, beyond our normal understanding, living their lives, according to their karma, in the heavens and hells. In our previous lives we, you and I, have passed

through many different forms, and in the countless lives to come we shall pass through many more. (This is, of course, the reason why Jains place such strong emphasis on ahimsa or non-violence: all living things are jiva, they are all important, even the smallest and apparently most insignificant, and the true Jain will try his hardest to avoid harm to any.)

Jain scholars from earliest times right up to the present have devoted much thought to elucidating and expanding the explanations of the karma processes as they are given in the ancient Jain scriptures. This is not easy to put into simple terms. As we said earlier, the word karma basically means actions. But Indian thinkers use the word karma for the process, or link, by which the actions of an individual have their effect on the soul. In most Indian schools of thought karma is seen as some sort of immaterial force or power, generated by the individual's actions and feelings, which then produces the effects of those actions on the soul.

Jainism has made a unique contribution to the study of karma. Karma is described not as an immaterial force but as tiny material particles. This fits in with the Jain view of the universe as having an actual material existence which is not just an illusion (as for example the Buddhists hold) when its deepest nature is fully understood. (Modern scientists will be on familiar ground here.) These particles permeate the entire universe and some of them flow into the soul of the individual, a process known as asrava, or simply 'inflow'. In the ordinary way of things the individual soul or jiva is subject to feelings of desire or hatred, and these make it receptive to the karma particles which, as it were, stick there or are bound to the soul (bandha or 'binding'). It might be helpful to think of the karma particle, in modern medical terms, as something like a virus. In certain conditions of the body the virus can move in and stick there, causing changes in the body which lead to illness. Similarly, in certain condition of the soul (jiva), that is when the individual has passions of desire or hate, the karma particles can move in and cause a obviously no virtue in refraining from violence or acquisitiveness because you are prevented by circumstances you cannot control. Suppose that you want to injure a person and you attack an inanimate dummy, fully believing that it is that person. You may not be guilty by law, but morally you are as guilty as if you had not been mistaken. Of course, if you have violent or greedy thoughts and consciously manage to control them, you are less blameworthy. That is why, a few lines back, we said that every action, whether it is physical or mental, has its effect. Our condition in life is the result of the things we do and the things we think, of our actions and our attitudes.

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Briefly, the types of karma fall into two divisions. The first division determines our future lives. One type of karma determines how long our life will be and whether in human, animal or other form; another determines our bodily state and destiny; another our status and circumstances; the fourth type, of this division, determines the joy, sorrow, pleasure, pain of life. It is believed that these types of karma have to work out their effects: there is nothing we can do to avert their consequences. The karma of the second division, however, may be cleared from the soul by austerity and spiritual discipline. Again there are four types, the effect of each is to obstruct or obscure one of the qualities of the soul, its intuition, its knowledge, its energy or its bliss.

To sum up so far, we are what we are now, in this life, because of the effects of karma. It was our own thoughts and actions in the past (in this life and in previous ones), our hates and desires, which created the conditions in our soul which allowed the karma particles to adhere and to impede the functioning of our soul. We are now what we, by our past actions, have made ourselves. This is fundamentally important: we cannot put the blame for our present behavior or our position in life on some remote god or blind fate or luck. In the words of an English poet, I am the master of fate, I am the captain of my soul.

Now the key to all this is passion. It is our feelings, our hatred for people who upset us, for other creatures which annoy us, and our desires for possessions, for prestige, for comfort, for sex, for enjoyment, which create the conditions in our jiva, or soul, which allow the karma particles to stick there. Get rid of these feelings of hate and desire: the karma particles will drop away and the inflow of karma will be stopped. However this is not easy, indeed it is very difficult indeed. As far back as we can go in the eternity of time each jiva has had some imperfections in it and these have allowed the passions to creep in, desire and hate. And these have allowed the karma particles to keep coming in.

And so the jiva has moved on to another rebirth, perhaps better, perhaps worse than the last. And another and another and another... We are tied to this almost endless chain of death and rebirth, death again and rebirth. How can we break this chain? Only by eliminating the accumulated karma in our soul and stopping any more from adhering to it. The process has two stages. First, the inflow of karma particles must be stopped (samvara, 'cessation'). Second, the accumulated karma particles must be shed (nirjara, 'shedding'). In the normal

course of events the karma particles will in due course produce their effects and drop off but by moral and spiritual practices this process may be hastened so that the soul becomes free from the accumulated karma.

The key, of course, is to get rid of all passion. Let us look at this a bit more closely. The basic passions are hate and desire, or we can subdivide them into anger and pride, deceit and greed. Nobody is free from these and, unless checked, they build up in the individual, leading him or her to more and more destructive thoughts and behavior. It can be very hard to get rid of these unpleasant passions, it will take a very long time and hard spiritual effort. Even when the individual has controlled them it is possible to slip back. The path is still difficult and the individual must be prepared to avoid the most harmful activities, killing, accumulating wealth, theft and so on. These every Jain man and woman must avoid. But there is another, more rigorous stage, possible only for the monk or nun who has given up worldly possessions and ambitions. Even monks may find that they are unable to control their passions so completely as to avoid all harmful acts. Even if they do, they can still lack the drive and sense of purpose which takes them to the final renunciation of passion.

But let us pause here for a moment. What is the object of all this? Why try to get rid of passions and hence of karma? Why try to break the chain of death and rebirth? Sometimes we are unhappy, true, but sometimes we are happy. Is it really worth the effort? This is a common point of view: many individuals have never got round to thinking of this seriously (indeed, Jains believe, there are some jiva which never will), or even to considering it. Indeed in all the worlds it is only human beings who have the real understanding fully to pursue the goal. But is it worth it?

The jiva has many qualities, of which knowledge and bliss are very important. We, you and I, have knowledge, we know many things, we can look at the world around us, or indeed at religious doctrine, and understand some of it. We also feel, do we not, occasionally an underlying sense of bliss, of happiness, of tranquillity? Sometimes we feel this strongly for a short time, but often, indeed most of the time, it is hidden, just as most of the facts of the world, of the universe, of religion, are hidden from us. Now the jiva really and basically has the ability to comprehend, to know, all knowledge, and equally it has the potential of complete and unlimited bliss and tranquillity. It is important to appreciate the basic underlying nature of the jiva or soul or essential individual self. In its purest state every individual has the capacity of omniscience, of perception and knowledge of everything in the universe. Total knowledge (the Jains call it keval jnana) is a difficult concept to comprehend. We meet people whom we admire for their vast range of knowledge, but even these know only a fraction, a tiny fraction, of the things which can be known. Human knowledge is very limited, very imperfect. Keval jnana, total knowledge, perfect knowledge, is something quite different, limitless in scope, not restricted by space or time, a complete and simultaneous understanding of the whole universe. Deep down within every individual self there is this faculty of universal comprehension.

The other main characteristic of the pure and essential jiva is total bliss or tranquillity. This, again, is a state which is not easy to understand. Happiness, contentment, tranquillity, are fleeting in this world. Even the most placid person is beset often by the worries and cares of human life. The mind never ceases acting, external thoughts disturb the rare moments of calm which we can enjoy. In its deepest being, calm and tranquillity are the natural condition of the jiva, but only in the pure and perfect state can the individual jiva return to this.

What then is it which is clouding over the light of boundless knowledge, which is disturbing and troubling the pure bliss of the perfect individual? The particles of karma prevent the jiva from realizing its full potential and tie it to the cycle of birth and death. We can only dimly imagine the state when karma has been totally eliminated from our soul and we are free, completely free, with boundless knowledge and utter tranquillity. This is the state called moksa and this is the goal of all spiritual endeavor. When the individual has become completely freed from all karma, and has achieved boundless knowledge, but still remains in this world, then that individual is known as an arhat. Finally the arhat passes from this world and as a siddha enters the ultimate state of moksa.

We have looked at the ideas of karma and jiva. We must first understand these and then we can investigate what we must do in life to follow the path which is thus pointed out to us. Jainism has a program of spiritual development for everyone. It is not easy nor is it short, it is very hard and very lengthy. But this is discussed later in the book.

To sum up, the whole aim of Jain philosophy is to purify the soul so that one has permanent bliss and happiness. The whole Jain way of life is directed to this ultimate goal.

DOCTRINES OF JAINISM:

The Science of Religion (ii)

The Jain scriptures and the writings of Jain scholars over many centuries right up to the present day have examined the puzzling question of the nature of the universe. Modern science has taught us a lot about the solar system and the great systems of stars beyond. At the other extreme, scientists have investigated the nature of the smallest units of matter. We know a lot about the biological nature of plants and animals and human beings. The great thinkers of Jainism have looked at these same subjects and have come up with solutions to many of the problems which have puzzled and, often, continue to puzzle scientists and philosophers. The solutions are, of course, expressed in a manner and language different from those of twentieth-century scientists, hence they may have an unfamiliar and often difficult sound for modern ears. (Our ways of expression will sound difficult to the people of the twenty-fifth century.)

You will probably ask 'Are the Jain solutions true?' No answer on the printed page is going to convince you. There are different ways of knowing things (and Jain thinkers have spent a lot of time analyzing them). Some things you know because you experience them yourself: grass is green because you see it, ice is cold because you feel it. Other things you have to accept because people who know tell you about them: there are jungles in Malaysia, the surface of the moon is cold and barren. Yet other things you know through some strange sense you cannot understand: the thoughts of a close friend, something good (or bad) is going to happen. So it is with the things which we are discussing in this chapter. Some fit in with our actual experience, or we feel instinctively that they are right. More we accept (or we may reject) because people who know (or say they know) have explained them. (Jain tradition says that many of these matters were originally explained by a person who had attained the highest kind of knowledge, total knowledge or omniscience.) In many cases we are moving close to or beyond the frontiers of human knowledge as we possess it now, but it can be said that very little in Jain science or philosophy is incompatible with the theories of twentieth-century science. Jain science goes beyond conventional science in many places, but only rarely do the two conflict.

This brings us to a most important aspect of the Jain way of looking at things. Jain thinkers stress that there are different ways of looking at any particular thing and that truth can take different, apparently contradictory, forms according to the viewpoint. The thought processes involved are called *anekantavada*, literally the view of 'non- one-sidedness', that is looking at things from all points of view. The thought processes are then given expression in a statement that 'in some respects' a certain fact is true, even though in other respects it is false. This way of giving expression to the different facets of truth is known as *syadvada*, the assertion that 'in some respects' something is true. The well-known story of the blind men and the elephant illustrates this. One felt its tail and said that an elephant is like a rope, another felt its side and said that an elephant is like a wall, and so on. Each statement is, of course, true, 'in some respects'. Somebody who examined the elephant from all points of view, who thought about it from the view of 'non-one-sidedness', would be careful to qualify the statements of the blind men by saying that 'in some respects' an elephant is like a rope, and so on. Or to take another example, is anything, let us say a diamond, everlasting? We know that a diamond is produced when carbon is subjected to extreme heat and pressure. So in one respect a diamond is everlasting, though in different forms, as carbon for example. In another respect, in the actual form of a diamond, it is not everlasting. Or again, we say that India is in the east. But to somebody in China India is in the west. *Syadvada* leads, not as some people have interpreted it, to vagueness in thinking, but to a very precise and thorough comprehension of reality. (And it also leads to tolerance of other people's views.)

The Jain explanation of the universe depends on two fundamental principles. First, the universe is eternal and has an actual material existence (a different view from the Buddhists, for example, who say that nothing has any permanent existence or any real material basis). Second there is no eternal all-powerful being, God, which created the universe or controls it. If the universe is eternal a creator is excluded and the universe acts and changes as a result of certain forces built into it.

Everything in the universe is either living or non-living (jiva or ajiva). Let us look first at the non-living part. Obviously we shall think of actual material here, solid or liquid, though at the basic level it will be in the form of atoms. Actual material, matter which has shape and can be touched or otherwise known by our sense organs is called pudgala. But there are four other kinds of non-living 'substances' (perhaps we would not think of them as 'substances' but in some ways it is a helpful way of looking at them). The first two are easy, time and space. The other two show an important Jain contribution, there is a principle of motion and a principle of rest, we could call them 'start' and 'stop'. When 'start' operates, things develop or change, when 'stop' operates on anything developing it ceases to do so and is still. So the non-living part of the universe is made up of matter, located in time and space, and changing or not as it is acted upon by the principles of 'start' and 'stop'. This is not too difficult for the non-philosopher to understand!

The living part of the universe is, of course, also affected by time and space, by 'stop' and 'start'. The word 'ajiva' is used for the non-living 'substances' so 'jiva' denotes the living ones. Whole books have been written on jiva: Jain scholars are very fond of producing elaborate schemes of classification of every conceivable thing and they have divided jiva up into numerous different types. We must be clear that a single jiva is an independent living soul. Every single living being, from the greatest to the tiniest, is an individual eternal jiva. The jiva, like everything else in the universe, is eternal though it changes its material body as it passes from one life to another. At the lowest extreme there are the tiny nigoda, infinitesimally small and short-lived, but existing in all parts of the universe. Earth, air, fire and water are populated by tiny jiva hardly greater than the nigoda. (It is to avoid their breath harming those in the air that some Jain monks wear a cloth over the mouth.) Above these are the jiva which have taken material life in all the various forms of plants, insects, fish, birds, animals and so on. Some of these forms of life have only one sense, the sense of touch, others have two, three, four or, in the case of man and the higher forms of animal life, five of the senses, to include taste, smell, sight and hearing. Human beings come in a rather special category for they have abilities of various kinds which distinguish them from plant and animal life. Apart from these, it is believed that regions beyond this world are inhabited by heavenly beings (we could call them 'gods' as long as we are clear that we are not speaking of any all-powerful god like the God of Western religion), and, in the lower regions, by creatures of hell. These four categories of life, in any of which an individual soul may be reincarnated, animals and plants, gods, hell-creatures, humans, are often symbolically represented by the four arms of a swastika. (The swastika is a very ancient Indian symbol: ~; it is unfortunate that many people associate it with the Nazis who stole it for their emblem in the 1920s.)

Jiva are living beings, that is they have consciousness, they are capable of knowing things. They are also capable of sensations of bliss. Indeed it is fundamental to Jain thought that the true state of a living being is one of complete knowledge and complete bliss, though this is obscured, in all save the totally liberated soul, by the particles of karma. Besides consciousness and bliss the jiva have what is described as 'energy', really energy in the modern scientific sense, the force which (like electricity in a lamp or machine) actually makes the individual souls function. All this is pretty straightforward: if we think of ourselves as individuals, we have consciousness or the ability to know things, we have (though not always) the ability to feel well-being or happiness, and we have something else, some sort of vital force that makes us operate.

Although it is possible for the individual soul to be reborn as a 'god' in the heavenly region, this is not the highest form of life. Sooner or later even the gods will expire and return to another form of life. The highest state of life, far different from that of every other form which the individual soul can attain, is the state of the liberated soul, of the siddha. This is the culmination of an almost infinite series of lives in which the soul, or jiva, has gradually progressed (with many setbacks on the way) until in a final human life the last vestiges of that karma which affects the spiritual progress of the soul have been cleared away and the

individual becomes an arhat, with knowledge widened to infinity. When this enlightened soul's last earthly body dies the liberated soul achieves the state of moksa or nirvana and passes to its new and final state in the abode of the siddha.

(The arhat has been cleared of those forms of karma which obstruct the true functioning of the soul. though the types of karma which determine the nature of bodily life will have to work out their effects before the enlightened soul finally achieves moksa. In each great half-cycle of time twenty-four arhat are known as Tirthankara: they are the teachers of religious faith and some writers restrict the term 'arhat' to these).

In many Jain books diagrams of the universe will be found. They show the occupied universe, which is usually depicted as having a roughly human form (in fact it is sometimes drawn like a human body), wider at the bottom where the legs are spread, narrowing to the waist, widening out again and then narrowing at the top to the head. This a convenient symbolic way of showing it. At the very top is the resting place of the siddha, the liberated souls. Below this are the upper worlds or heavens, occupying the 'trunk' of the human shape. The world which we know and the other worlds as well, which are occupied by humans, animals and plants, are at the 'waist'. Below this again are the underworlds and hells. Outside there is nothing but boundless empty space where there is no life or movement or matter. Such a diagram will, of course, be regarded by many people nowadays as simply a symbolic representation, but it does show very conveniently in a diagrammatic form the way in which the various forms of life fit in.

These two chapters have considered in a very simplified way the main principles of Jainism. Jains speak of nine fundamentals which sum up the principles of Jainism.

These are as follows:

The make-up of the universe:

- (1) living souls (jiva), universe:
- (2) non-living substances (ajiva);

The principles of behaviour :

- (3) merit, good results in karma (Punya),
- (4) demerit, bad results in karma (papa);

The development of karma:

- (5) inflow into the soul (asrava), karma;
- (6) stopping inflow (samvara),
- (7) binding of karma to the soul (bandha),
- (8) clearing out of karma (nirjara);

The final goal:

- (9) complete liberation of the soul (moksa)

If you read these chapters again you will see how the nine sum up Jainism.

THE JAIN PATH IN LIFE:

The Religious Life of the Lay Man or Woman

As we have seen earlier, Mahavira started a fourfold organization of monks and nuns, who can follow his teachings to the utmost limit of human capability, and lay men and women who follow them within the limits of their everyday duties. All can achieve moksa but monks and nuns, because they have no attachments, can follow the path of purification more quickly. Persons born in the Jain community have a better chance of learning the right path, but any person following the teachings of Mahavira can be regarded as a true Jain. The aim of the Jain path in life is to liberate the soul and achieve moksa. There are definite rules laid down for lay people and for monks and nuns.

One thing will strike the thinking man or woman who has been brought up in the Jain community, or who looks at Jainism from outside. This is that Right Faith and Right Knowledge must be complemented by Right Conduct. The conduct of the Jain lay person can

be seen from different angles. There is, firstly, the outward practice of rituals, festivals, fasts, pilgrimages. Secondly, there is private behavior, the moral way of life laid down in the five principles of non-violence, of truthfulness, of non-stealing and of restraint in sex and material acquisition. But Jainism is not just outward rituals coupled with a moral way of life. The private behavior of a Jain includes study, reflection and meditation, which bring the outward practices and the moral life into harmony with the truly religious life.

Non-violence or harmlessness is advocated by many religions: in Jainism it is elevated to the highest principle of behavior. How does this work out in practice? A Jain will obviously avoid occupations or sports which involve violence towards living beings, hunting or fishing for example. Sometimes violence is seen as unavoidable: any Jain should try to avoid harming even the tiniest creature but it is realized that the lay person will unavoidably harm minute one-sensed beings at times. It is impossible to live without harming tiny creatures. Simple acts like lighting a fire or digging a garden may unavoidably harm or destroy small forms of life. Disinfectants and antibiotics act by destroying the life of minute living creatures: Jains believe that these have living souls just as we have. However Jains are often found in the practice of medicine and even as soldiers. There have been noted Jain generals in Indian history who must have rationalized the destruction of the enemy as an act of unavoidable harm in the defense of their country. Obviously there can be serious tensions and difficulties for the individual Jain in the practice of ahimsa but it must be remembered that violence is a mental act as well as a physical one. Some, at least, of the effect of violence on the person who performs it is removed if the act is done, not savagely, not thoughtlessly, but with a real feeling of sorrow and regret. Some violence in the necessary performance of one's everyday duties has to be allowable for lay men and women (but is totally forbidden for monks and nuns) because it is unavoidable. It must be remembered that violence may not always take a physical form: hurting the feelings of another may be just as much an act of violence as hurting his body.

To the outsider the most obvious mark of the Jain's concern with non-violence is seen in Jain food. Jains believe that living beings may be possessed of one, two, three, four or five senses (human beings have five senses and the special faculty of the human mind). Our human body is necessary to enable us to clear out the karma from the soul, or jiva, by right conduct. To support that body we must take nourishment but we can reduce to a minimum the violence and anguish thus caused to other beings by restricting our diet to the one-sensed forms of life. Thus Jains will avoid all food except that derived from plants (which have only one sense, that of touch). Even then care is taken because plants can be hosts to teeming microscopic life, some more than others. Jains avoid root vegetables which have always been believed to contain many minute beings. Certain Indian fruits of the fig family have also been forbidden from ancient times. The fermentation process engenders, it is believed, tiny forms of life, so alcohol is avoided (as well as for its stupefying properties). Likewise eggs, even if unfertilized, are forbidden. Food is not taken at night when insects and the like may inadvertently be consumed. The basic rules are simple: harm cannot be totally avoided but to minimize it meat, fish, eggs, root vegetables and alcohol are avoided. In spite of these limitations Jain food is wholesome and delicious. Various kinds of beans provide protein, vitamins come from fruit and vegetables, spices add flavor, and dairy products, milk and yogurt, are very acceptable. In proper balance these constitute a healthy diet. The influence of Jainism can be seen in the diet of the Indian people.

Truthfulness is the second of the five 'great vows'. Here we have the avoidance of doing harm to others in a less violent way. Truthfulness does not just mean accuracy, but the avoidance of hurtful or slanderous words of untruth about other people. It means sincerity and honesty in business and public life and in personal relations. Non-stealing is the third virtue. Theft harms the victim: it also harms the thief, for it is bound up with acquisitiveness. Theft is an expression of the desire for material possessions. Theft can take subtle forms, little instances of cheating, tax evasion, unscrupulous business deals and the like. With the emphasis on the virtues of truth and honesty it is not surprising that Jains have often made very successful businessmen.

The last two of the five great vows go quite well together. The Jain seeks to control the desire for the things of this world, for sex or for material possessions. For the layman that does not mean total abstinence from these, but confining them within proper limits. The proper limits exclude extra-marital sex and exclude the flaunting of material possessions beyond the limit necessary for a reasonable standard of living. (It is traditionally advised for a Jain to live on

half his income, to save a quarter for old age, sickness etc., and to devote the remaining quarter to charity.)

The Jain path in life involves the cultivation of self-control, the avoidance of passions of desire and hate, an even-minded attitude to hardship and deprivation. The lay man or woman, caught up in the business of family and work, cannot lightly abandon the things of this world but in the early stages of spiritual training he or she will try hard to reduce dependence on them. Following the path of Jainism, he or she will have high ethical standards. This will include living within one's limits, hospitality and consideration towards others, control of the temper and avoiding harsh or slanderous words, appreciating the good points of others. Violence and misdeeds will be the occasion for regret and sorrow. Such a person will cultivate equanimity which will make it possible to cope with the joys and troubles of life.

To help in the observance of the five great vows there are some supplementary rules which a lay person can undertake to observe. They are a form of self-discipline, like not moving outside a determined area for a certain time, either a wide area (like one's own country, or beyond the mountains or river) or a small area (one's village or garden perhaps). In the first case the vow will apply for a lifetime, in the second for a day or so up to a year. Those are the first two supplementary vows. The third involves refraining from acts, thoughts and words which are harmful and purposeless: these can range from idle chatter to obscene speech and will include accumulating unnecessary possessions. Fourthly, the individual can make a vow that he or she will reduce attachment to material things by giving up certain foods or other objects of use for a fixed period. Next comes samayika or meditation. This really means achieving equanimity and it ought to be practiced two or three times a day. Sixthly, certain days of the month should be observed as days of fasting, coupled with other restrictions to bring the lay person's life for those days as near as possible to that of a monk or nun. Lastly comes the vow not to take food oneself on any day until after providing for the needs of a monk or nun or other

The five vows and the seven supplementary ones form the lay person's basic code of conduct. One final stage remains for the lay person (or indeed for the monk or nun): that is known as sallekhana. When old age and infirmity are advanced and the body can no longer be used for good purposes, the Jain may complete the abandonment of the things of the world by quietly and gradually giving up all food and drink, whilst keeping the mind occupied in meditation and religious activities, until death supervenes. Jains do not like the word 'suicide' for this, for no violence, in action or mind, is involved. It is the highest form of non-violence where violence in action and mind are avoided to the maximum and thus it helps the spiritual advancement of the soul. (A similar practice was followed by the religious sect of Cathars in medieval Europe.) Sallekhana is the ultimate spiritual discipline, followed, of course, by only a few people but regarded as bringing the present life to a meritorious close.

THE JAIN PATH IN LIFE:

The Higher Stages of the Religious Life

Whilst it is quite possible to lead a religious life as a lay person complete devotion to religion involves giving up completely the concerns of ordinary life. In most religions we find groups of people, usually fairly small in numbers, who leave home and family and occupation to live dedicated lives as monks or nuns. We are told that Mahavira organized the Jain community into four sections, monks or nuns, who can follow his teachings to the fullest extent, as well as lay men and lay women. Monks and nuns make up, of course, only a small part of the Jain community but they are a very important part. * For a religion which has no priests, the monks and nuns serve as religious teachers. Most of the great Jain scholars of the past were monks and even today, when there are also considerable scholars amongst the ranks of the Jain laity, many of the important works on Jain religion are written by monks. Monks and nuns set an example of the religious life for lay people: their duty is their own souls' spiritual welfare, and that of others as well. They are greeted and treated with great respect and it is an act of merit for the householder to feed them and otherwise provide for their needs. They possess no property beyond the bare essentials, a couple of pieces of cloth for clothing (monks of the Digambara division of Jainism do not even have these and go completely naked), a bowl,

walking stick, a soft brush to remove insects gently, and one or two other objects, together with books and writing materials. Their daily needs are supplied by the faithful.

Although it is permitted that a boy who shows exceptional promise for the religious life may become a monk as early as the age of eight, most people will be adults, or at least in their teens, when they do so. Indeed it is quite common for middle-aged people to enter the mendicant life. The prospective mendicant must be free from physical infirmities and moral shortcomings and will seek the permission of parents or guardian. The candidate will seek out a guide and teacher (guru) in the order who will make sure that this person is suitable in every way and who will remain his mentor throughout life. The diksa or initiation ritual will be the occasion for great ceremony, when the candidate renounces his worldly possessions and receives the essential items for his new life. His hair is plucked out in imitation of the act of Mahavira when he renounced worldly things. Now the initiate receives a new name to show that he has completely left his home and family and all his earlier life. Family life, business, politics, are no concern of the Jain monk or nun. For the first year or two the novice will receive training in the rules and practices of monastic life before being confirmed in his or her vocation.

The sadhu or sadhvi is bound to keep the five great moral precepts in their fullest rigor. Non-violence involves for the mendicant the most meticulous care to avoid harm to even minute creatures which have only one sense, the sense of touch. (It is recognized that a layman cannot always avoid harm to these.) This can involve softly sweeping the ground if necessary to clear living creatures, carefully removing insects, and sometimes using a cloth over the mouth to avoid harm to the most subtle beings of the air. The vows of truthfulness and non-stealing are interpreted in the strictest manner: the mendicant may not take even the most trivial object without its owner's permission. Sexual restraint is total, non-acquisitiveness means the virtually complete abandonment of material possessions.

The person who has adopted the mendicant life should cultivate ten qualities. First comes forgiveness of those who have done harm and avoidance of anger. Then there are modesty (not least the avoidance of pride in one's spiritual achievements), avoidance of deceit or concealing one's faults, contentment and the avoidance of greed, teaching others the high ideals of the scriptures, watchfulness to avoid harm to living beings, undertaking austerities without hope of material reward, avoidance of tasty food and comfortable lodging, complete renunciation of the desire for possessions, and lastly careful restriction on association with members of the opposite sex. Self-control, and vigilance in every daily action to avoid harm, are the two chief virtues.

The daily life of the sadhu or sadhvi is ordered and regulated. The monk rises from his simple bed hours before dawn. He says the Panca Namaskara, the fivefold formula of obeisance to the superior beings. He greets his teacher respectfully. A period of meditation follows, after which he recites the rituals of penance or confession (Pratikramana) for any violence or misdeeds he may have committed. He checks his clothing carefully and removes any small creatures which might get harmed (and he will do this at least twice a day). By this time the sun will have risen and he can spend a couple of hours in studying the scriptures (for a monk does not use artificial light). The teachers will give sermons for both monks and laity. Then he will go to the temple to worship the Tirthankara. Detailed rules regulate the way in which monks and nuns may seek their food: they should go each day to different houses and will accept only food which is willingly given and not specially prepared for them and, of course, which is acceptable in terms of the Jain monastic vows. On returning from the trip to seek food the monk will present the food before his teacher and will share it with other monks who, from sickness or other cause, cannot themselves seek food, before he takes any food himself. The afternoon and evening are devoted to further study and meditation as well as the small tasks like writing letters which even a mendicant will have to do. There will be a second trip to seek food in the late afternoon so that the meal may be eaten before nightfall. The day ends with a further visit to the temple, a further ritual of contrition, and the monk goes to bed after vowing forgiveness to those who have harmed him and seeking forgiveness from all. The life of a sadhu or sadhvi (nuns follow the same routine) is hard but they learn to overcome hardships and face them resolutely and with detachment.

The spiritual life of the Jain has been likened to a ladder. There are fourteen 'rungs' or stages (gunasthana) on the ladder. These have been described in great detail in the scriptures. To

start with the individual has not even begun the ascent and has totally wrong attitudes. If the individual can get rid of delusions then the soul succeeds in going straight to the fourth rung of the ladder but the position is still precarious and it is possible to slip back onto two different levels of wavering states and even right back to the beginning. But if the individual can control passions desires, hatred to a reasonable extent (not retaining them beyond the annual self-examination in the Paryusana season of the Jain year) the ascent is begun. He or she will now feel a tranquillity of spirit, will have the ability to discriminate between right and wrong, will want to avoid purely material pleasures, will be kindhearted to others and will have a clear vision of truth. Such attitudes will naturally lead on to undertaking to obey the five great moral precepts, and this will be the next rung on the ladder. We saw in the previous chapter how the lay person reduces his or her attachment to the things of the world and develops attachment to religion. That process happens at this stage or rung on the spiritual

The sixth rung on the ladder marks a great decision for now the individual has progressed so far that he or she is intent on renouncing the world and adopting the life of a monk or nun. Henceforth life is totally directed towards spiritual progress. The great vows are followed in their entirety and the individual reaches the stage of eliminating all the stronger passions. Daily self-examination and sorrow for offenses committed knowingly or unknowingly is now obligatory and the individual who succeeds in the discipline of the sixth stage rises further to the next rung. Passions are virtually subdued but alertness is still needed to prevent slipping back. The aspirant climbs three more rungs, at each stage gaining more complete control over himself. The eleventh rung is unsafe: even now, nearing the top of the ladder the individual soul can drop back, desires and hatred can arise again and the slow climb must be restarted. Some individuals, very few at any time, reach the twelfth stage. Delusions and desires have been eliminated and the way is clear to the thirteenth rung when the soul achieves complete enlightenment, total knowledge. The fourteenth rung detains only momentarily the enlightened soul which passes quickly over it to achieve moksa or total liberation.

This is a long process. Every individual soul passes through countless lives. Sometimes progress is made, sometimes not. The mendicant who sets himself or herself resolutely towards spiritual development still has a long way to go. Even when self-control is almost achieved and delusive views of the nature of life and the universe have disappeared for the few who reach the stage described as the tenth rung on the ladder, the completion of what can be described as the constructive stages of the mystical life, even then the old suppressed passions can re-emerge and the final goal recedes as the soul drops back into old habits, old feelings, old delusions.

Throughout the development of the spiritual life the individual will have before his or her eyes the example of the Tirthankara. According to Jain tradition, in each of the great cycles of time, lasting countless thousands of years, some people gain total enlightenment. Of these, twenty-four in each half-cycle are known as Tirthankara. They are the ones who, having achieved total knowledge themselves, pass on knowledge in teaching the people, before they leave the world and attain the ultimate state of moksa. Mahavira was, of course, the twenty-fourth Tirthankara in the current half-cycle of time. At all stages of the religious life the Tirthankara are seen as a help to the aspiring soul, they are the nearest thing Jainism has to a god, in fact they are sometimes even called 'god'. In a Jain temple the image of the Tirthankara is worshipped and treated with great devotion and respect. But the individual must understand that the Tirthankara is to be taken as a supreme example of spiritual struggle and success, not as the donor of favors or the author of fortune or misfortune. The individual must work out salvation for himself but it is a great help and very meritorious to meditate on the example of the Tirthankara (whether in the presence of an image or without that material figure before the eyes), to take the Tirthankara as an ideal and to resolve to follow the path the Tirthankara has shown.

DAILY PRACTICES AND RECITATIONS

Six daily duties are recommended for the lay Jain. These are not compulsory rules but advisable practices to help spiritual development. Here they are:

- (1) meditation and prayer,
- (2) honor to the Tirthankara,

- (3) respect for spiritual teachers,
- (4) repentance for the things one has done wrong,
- (5) control of the body by holding a fixed position during meditation,
- (6) renunciation of certain pleasures, activities, foods, for a fixed time.

Somadeva, a great teacher of the 10th century A. D., in a widely-read list of duties. included charity and reading the scriptures.

The religious life of the individual is helped by a regular routine of religious practice. Whilst religion will permeate the whole life of the pious Jain, he or she will also want to set aside some time each day to concentrate the mind on religion. This may be a time of meditation, or it may be accompanied by ritual actions, it may take place in the home or, if a temple is convenient, in the temple, or in a meditation hall. A short time set aside each day (the traditional period is forty-eight minutes) in a quiet place is possible for all of us. The mind is calmed, passions are reduced, self-control develops.

Reference has been made to the Panca Namaskara, the best-known prayer of the Jains, It is a formula of surrender, not request, to the five categories of praiseworthy individuals. The rolling sounds of the ancient language echo at every Jain religious gathering, chanted by all the people, who learned it in childhood.

Namo Arihantanam	I bow to the enlightened souls
Namo Siddhanam	I bow to the liberated souls
Namo Ayariyanam	I bow to religious leaders
Namo Uvajjhayanam	I bow to religious teachers
Namo Loe Savva Sahunam	I bow to all the monks in the world

Eso Panca Namokkaro Savva Pavappanasano
Mamgalanam ca Savvesim Padhamam Havai Mangalam

This fivefold salutation which destroys all sin is pre- eminent as the most auspicious of all auspicious things.

Samayika really means equanimity: the practice of samayika involves meditation, usually for a fixed period of forty- eight minutes. At its simplest it is performed in any quiet place. The person sits quietly cross-legged like a monk (for samayika is sometimes seen as a temporary ascetic state), and turns the mind to compassion and friendship with all living beings, and to separation from all desire and hatred. Sometimes the devotee will recite verses which have been learned in the ancient Ardhamagadhi language of the scriptures, asking forgiveness, promising virtuous conduct and praising the great figures of the Jain religion. Sometimes samayika may be carried out in the presence of a religious teacher. The devotee will bow to the monk and recite a formula of dedication and confession before commencing meditation. The spiritual presence of the teacher will have a beneficial effect.

Jains will often use a simple religious formula as a focus for meditation, or will meditate before an image of the Tirthankara, or perhaps diagrams on cloth or metal depicting in graphic form objects and persons of the faith. A Jain home will quite probably have at least one image, perhaps in an elaborate and beautiful shrine.

Some Jains (the Sthanakvasi sect) do not believe that images should be used but for the majority of Jains more elaborate rituals are advocated. It is important to remember that the rituals are intended to concentrate the mind. The material objects, the actions, the words, are all means to an end, not an end in themselves. Different groups of Jains in different parts of India will, of course, carry out the rituals with some variations.

A pious Jain who lives conveniently near a temple may carry out the worship of the Tirthankara image in the temple daily before going to work. Otherwise it may be performed before the shrine at home. Bathed and dressed simply, possibly only in two pieces of cloth like a monk, he will bow before the image and recite the Panca Namaskara. He will pass three times around the image (which in a Jain temple is set forward from the rear wall) . He may perform the ritual washing of the image with water and milk and a mixture of sandalwood and

saffron, or it may be done by a regular official of the temple. Although women take an active part in Jain rituals their role is somewhat simplified.

Various offerings are now made before the image. Grains of rice are arranged in the symbolic figure of Jainism, a swastika (denoting the four possible kinds of rebirth, as heavenly beings, humans, lower living beings, or creatures of hell) having above it three dots (the Three Jewels of Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct), and at the top a single dot within a crescent for the final resting place of the liberated souls. The other offerings may be flowers, incense, fruit and sweets though the practice varies. After other prayers the Panca Namaskara is repeated. This will be followed by the Chaitya Vandana, the temple prayers of reverent salutation: these commence with a formula of repentance for any harm caused to living creatures on the way to the temple; salutations follow to the twenty-four Tirthankara and to all monks and nuns; then the virtues and good deeds of all the Tirthankara follow and the devotee expresses the desire and intention to emulate them. In his or her devotions the worshipper does not seek worldly favor but sees the Jina as a divine example to be respected and followed. The worship concludes with the rather beautiful ceremony of arati, the waving of fivefold lights before the image. The image is, of course, only a symbolic representation of the Tirthankara and is in no sense a living god. Nevertheless it is considered necessary that a fully-consecrated image should receive daily attention and worship.

A special beauty is given to the rituals by the language in which they are performed. Ardhamagadhi was the language of the ancient Magadha region in north-east India where Mahavira lived. It was the familiar speech of the people, a 'Prakrit' or popular language as distinguished from the classical Sanskrit of the orthodox scholars. Although no longer a spoken language, Ardhamagadhi is used today in Jain prayers and rituals, not only for the sonorous splendor of its rolling sounds but also because a Jain, whatever his or her native tongue, can follow the familiar prayers and chants. Every Jain will have learned from childhood at least a few recitations and can take part in temple prayers with other Jains with whom he or she may not share a common modern language.

Other practices are recommended as beneficial to the spiritual development of the individual. Monks and nuns receive great honor from the laity and it is a meritorious thing to pay one's respects formally to them on occasion and to make a confession in set terms of one's faults and misdeeds. It is, of course, a duty of the laity, and one giving great merit, to provide food and other necessities for the mendicants. Another recommended practice which we must mention is the reading of the scriptures, for these enshrine the wisdom and example which can help a Jain greatly on the spiritual path. Jains are very generous to Jain charitable objects: again merit ensues to the individual who contributes to temple buildings, religious education, refuges for animals and the like.

Needless to say, not every Jain manages to fit a full schedule of religious activities into every working day. What follows is the simple daily routine recommended for a pious Jain. He or she will get up an hour and a half before sunrise and will commence the day with the Panca Namaskara and other prayers. Reflecting on the spiritual advancement of the soul, the pious Jain will recite sincerely the Pratikramana, the formula of contrition for harm and misdeeds. A visit to the temple follows as described above. Then the monks are visited, respectfully greeted and their needs cared for, or if there are no monks there, is given to fellow Jains or others who need it. If there is time it may be possible to hear a sermon from a learned monk. The religious person will not eat at night, nor in the first forty-eight minutes of the day, so breakfast is deferred until now. The daily work will, of course, occupy most of the day, broken by a period of prayer before the midday meal. The last meal of the day should finish before sunset. There will be an evening visit to the temple for worship and arati, the ceremonial waving of lights before the image. The day will end with a further repetition of the prayer of repentance and perhaps reading the scriptures. With the mind calm, forgiving all others and seeking forgiveness, the Jain goes to bed, and if sleep is disturbed calms the mind again with scriptures or the Panca Namaskara.

An important part of Jain spiritual training is the control of the body, so that hardship and suffering are accepted even-mindedly, the passions are reduced, the inflow of karma is lessened and existing karma is shed. The lay person will share, in lesser degree, in the austerities of the monastic life. Austerity (tapas) can take various forms. Essentially, however, it needs to be approached with the right attitude, not seeking worldly reward nor allowing

mental disturbance to result. Of the six 'external' austerities, four are concerned with food, fasting (which is often undertaken on the set fasting days each month), eating less than enough to satisfy hunger, going without food unless some arbitrary outside condition is fulfilled, avoiding more tasty foods. Jains do take these seriously and food restrictions are a common form of self-discipline. Solitariness or seclusion for the avoidance of temptation is the fifth austerity, and the sixth is the acceptance of deliberate physical hardship in One form or another. Linked with these are six internal austerities, repentance, respect to monks and nuns, service to them, study of the sacred scriptures, detachment from the body and passions and lastly deep meditation. These are all part of the spiritual training of the monk. but the lay person can also, though without the same single-mindedness, share in these austerities.

RITUALS AND FESTIVALS

Jainism has a very rich life of rituals and festivals. It is important to remember that these are not simply empty play-acting but all have a deep significance which is of benefit to the participant or onlooker. The rituals should fix the mind on the great religious truths: the individual should seek to understand the deep meaning expressed in the quiet or crowded and colorful rituals. The events of Mahavira's life are repeated frequently in symbolic form and the symbols, actions, words and images, unite to bring the Jain follower's mind and spirit into an understanding of, and union with, the life and message of Mahavira. For many people to whom the more abstruse aspects of religious philosophy are a closed book the rituals provide a direction, a focus, for the expression of devotion to the Tirthankara. The devotee worships with his or her mind concentrated and pure, free from violence and harm, and in a condition to disperse the accumulated karma from the soul. The rituals are not, of course, only for simple and unlettered people, but they bring together those whose learning gives them an understanding of the deepest significance of the rituals with those content to lose themselves in the quiet ecstasy of devotion.

The daily life of a pious Jain will be interwoven with ritual acts. Spreading grain for the birds in the morning, filtering or boiling water for the next few hours' use, these are ritual acts of charity and non-violence. Samayika, the practice of equanimity, loosely translated 'meditation', is a ritual act undertaken early in the morning and perhaps also at noon and night. It lasts for forty-eight minutes (one-thirtieth part of the day, an Indian unit of time) and involves usually not just quiet recollection but also usually the repetition of ritual prayers. Pratikramana should be performed in the morning in repentance for wrongs committed during the night, again in the evening, and additionally at certain points in the year. During this, the Jain expresses contrition for harm caused, wrong done, duties left undone.

Worship before the Jina image has been described in the previous chapter. Bowing to the image, and lighting a lamp before it, is a fitting start to the day. More elaborate worship (pug), as described, is a regular daily ritual, perhaps in the temple (which the worshipper enters with the words 'Namo Jnanam' 'I bow to the Jina', and, repeated three times, 'Nisih' to relinquish thoughts about worldly affairs), but the simpler surroundings of the household shrine can provide a suitable setting.

Worship, or puja, can take many forms. The ritual bathing of the image (Snatra Puja) is said to go back to the bathing of the newborn Tirthankara by the gods (or heavenly beings, not gods in the omnipotent, eternal sense). (A simple symbolic act is to touch one's forehead with the liquid used to bathe the image .) Bathing the image also takes place during the Panch Kalyanak Puja, a ritual to commemorate the five great events of the Tirthankara's life, conception, birth, renunciation, omniscience and moksa. Antaraya Karma Puja comprises a series of prayers to help to remove that karma which deludes and hinders the soul. A lengthy temple ritual which can take three days to complete is the Arihanta Puja, respect to the arhant (arhat) or omniscient souls, and to a long sequence of other beings. There is a ritual of prayer focused on the Siddhachakra, a lotus-shaped disc bearing representations of the arhat, the liberated soul, religious teacher, religious leader and the monk (the five praiseworthy beings), as well as the four qualities of perception, knowledge, conduct and austerity.

It must be said that there is a narrow dividing line between symbolism and superstition. Some people, claiming to be 'rational', will dismiss all ritual acts as superstitious. That is to misunderstand their nature completely: the Jina image has no miraculous powers. Ordinary life is full of rituals, from simple greetings to the ritualized conduct of a public meeting. Religious rituals must not be seen as an end in themselves: they express, in simple or elaborate symbolic form, the individual's desire and intention to follow the example and teaching of Mahavira. The splendor of the temple, the beauty of the words and chants, all help the worshipper towards a reverent state of mind. Some people can do without these external 'props' but they should not scorn those who value them.

In India the European calendar is generally used for business and government matters but religious festivals are usually fixed according to the Indian calendar. This calendar is quite straightforward but, as it is based on the phases of the moon, dates are not always the same from year to year as in the European calendar based on the sun.

The serious Jain will fast, more or less completely, and undertake other religious practices, on many days in the year. Ten days in the month of the Indian calendar are kept as fasts by the pious (though others may keep a lesser number). The first day of the three seasons in the Indian year is also of special sanctity. Twice a year, falling in March/April and September/October, the nine-day Oli period of semi-fasting is observed when Jains take only one meal a day, of very plain food. Maunagiyaras falls in November/December when a day of complete silence and fasting is kept and meditation is directed towards the five holy beings, monk, teacher, religious leader, arhat and siddha. This day is regarded as the anniversary of the birth of many of the Tirthankara.

Mahavira was born most probably in the year 599 B.C. and the exact date is given in the scriptures as the thirteenth day of the bright half (i.e. when the moon was waxing) of the month of Caitra. In the European calendar this will fall in March or April. The festival to commemorate this, known as Mahavira Jayanti, is an occasion for great celebration. Jains gather together to hear Mahavira's message expounded, so that they can follow his teachings and example. The dreams of his mother before his birth may be dramatically presented and the circumstances of his birth, as narrated in the scriptures, explained to the assembled people. The image of Mahavira is ceremonially bathed and rocked in a cradle. In many places processions take place through the streets with the image having the place of honor, and in some regions in India this is a general public holiday. One custom associated with the celebrations is to break a coconut at the end and distribute small pieces.

Paryusana is the most important period in the Jain year. This is the eight-day period of fasting and religious activities which falls in the months of Sravana and Bhadra (August or September). During the rainy season in India Jain monks cease walking from one town to another and settle in a fixed location with the purpose of reducing the prospect of injury to the living things now springing to life. Often a town will invite a respected monk to stay in its vicinity during the rainy season (sometimes with a beautifully written manuscript invitation) and the people will receive him with great pomp and rituals. A course of lectures or sermons by a monk or other respected person is a regular feature of Paryusana.

The word Paryusana is derived from two words meaning 'a year' and 'a coming back': it is a period of repentance for the acts of the previous year and of austerities to help shed the accumulated karma. Austerity, it must be remembered, is not an end in itself, but the control of one's desire for material pleasures is a part of spiritual training. During this period some people fast for the whole eight days, some for lesser periods (a minimum of three days is laid down in the scriptures), but it is considered obligatory to fast on the last day of Paryusana. Fasting usually involves complete abstinence from any sort of food or drink, but some people do take boiled water during the daytime.

There are regular ceremonies in the temple and meditation halls during this time and the Kalpa Sutra (one of the Jain sacred books: 'sutra' means a religious book), which includes a detailed account of Mahavira's life, is read to the congregation. On the third day of Paryusana the Kalpa Sutra receives special reverence and may be carried in procession to the house of one member of the community who has made a generous donation in recognition of the honor, where it is worshipped all night with religious songs. On the fifth day, at a special ceremony, the auspicious dreams of Mahavira's mother before his birth are demonstrated. Listening to the Kalpa Sutra, taking positive steps that living beings are not killed (perhaps paying money to

butchers to cease slaughtering), brotherhood to fellow Jains, forgiveness to all living beings, visits to all neighboring temples, these are the important activities at this time.

The final day of Paryusana is the most important of all. On this day those who have observed the fast rigorously are sometimes specially honored to encourage others to follow their example. This is also the day when Jains ask forgiveness from family and friends for any faults which they have committed towards them in the previous year. It is regarded as a definite stage in the spiritual life not to harbor ill-will beyond the space of one year so the annual occasion for repentance and forgiveness is important. Shortly after Paryusana it is the custom to organize a Swami Vastyalaya dinner at which all Jains are welcome and sit together whatever their social position.

Diwali is a most important festival in India and in Jainism it is second only to Paryusana. For Jains Diwali marks the anniversary of the attainment of moksa by Mahavira at the end of his life on earth in 527 B.C. (and also of the achievement of total knowledge, omniscience, by his chief follower, Gautama Indrabhuti). The festival falls on the last day of the month of Asvina, the end of the year in the Indian calendar (in October or November), but the remembrance starts in the early morning of the previous day, for it was then that Mahavira commenced his last sermon which was to last until, late in the night of Diwali, he left his earthly body and achieved liberation. It is narrated that eighteen kings of northern India who were in his audience decided that the light of their master's knowledge would be kept alive symbolically by the lighting of lamps. Hence it is called Dipavali, from dipa, a lamp, or Diwali. Mahavira's chief disciple, Gautama, had not been able to overcome his attachment to his master and this had prevented his achieving enlightenment. The barrier was only broken after a period of grief when he at last managed that highest degree of non-attachment which allowed him to reach the stage of omniscience, enlightenment.

Jains celebrate the two days with religious fervor: some fast for two days as Mahavira did. Others celebrate Diwali in traditional Indian fashion. Diwali itself is a great day of celebration with sweets and presents for the children, and of course the lights which mark this day throughout India. On this day too, a Jain businessman will make up his accounts for the year and a simple ceremony of worship is held in the presence of the account books. The New Year begins the next day and is the occasion for joyful gatherings of Jains, with everybody wishing each other a Happy New Year. The fifth day of the New Year is known as Jnana Pancham, the day of knowledge, when the scriptures, which impart knowledge to the people, are worshipped with religious devotion.

The best-known prayer of the Jains has already been mentioned and is given in full in the previous chapter. This is the Panca Namaskara, the formula of obeisance to the five categories of great beings, arhat, siddha, religious leader, teacher and monk. It is often known as the Namaskara Mantra ('mantra' means a religious formula or prayer). The Namaskara Mantra, repeated perhaps seven or eight times, will be the first prayer of the Jain on getting up in the morning and the last before going to bed at night. It commences temple and private rituals and is used as a focus for meditation by many people (who may count the repetitions on a rosary of 108 beads). Every Jain will learn this prayer in childhood and it will stay with him or her all through life. Another noble prayer translates as follows:

Let the whole cosmos be blessed,
Let all beings be engaged in one another's well-being,
Let all weaknesses, sickness and faults be diminished and vanish,
Let everyone everywhere be blissful and peaceful.

It will be learned, of course, in the original tongue, so that all Jains, whatever their own language, can understand it:

Shivmastu sarva jagatah,
Parahita nirata bhavantu bhutaganah,
Doshah prayantu nasham, Sarvatra sukhi bhavatu lokah.

It is impossible in the space available to describe all the rich variety of Jain rituals and festivals. Ceremonies attend the diksa or initiation of a monk, the consecration of a temple or the installation of an idol. The last two, temple consecrations or idol installations, are crowded

and exciting affairs marked by prayers and rituals and hymns and chants. Lay people bid excitedly for the privilege and merit of taking the leading parts and large sums may be raised for the work of the temple by this means. (Money raised in this way must be used only for temple building and renovation: funds for other purposes like meetings or dinners or meditation halls are raised and accounted for separately.) Jainism has no priests as such though sometimes Hindus of the priestly Brahmin caste may perform ceremonial functions for the Jains. Monks and nuns take an important part in some ceremonies (and they are, of course, active as religious teachers). But it is very noticeable that the Jain laity, both men and women, take a most active part in all aspects of religious life, including the rituals in the temples or elsewhere.

Let us end this chapter with the Jain prayer of forgiveness. Jains seek forgiveness, not from an almighty god, but from those living beings they have harmed.

I forgive all living beings,
Let all living beings forgive me;
All in this world are my friends,
I have no enemies.
Khamemi savve jive,
Sawe jiva khamantu me;
Mitti me sawa bhuesu,
Veram majza na kenai.

PILGRIMAGE AND SACRED PLACES

There are many places in India which are of special importance to Jains because of associations with holy persons of the past. Some are the places where the enlightened ones left this world and achieved final liberation, some are places where celebrated religious events occurred, at others a famous temple (often many temples) or image draws the pilgrims. Pilgrimage to such places has long been popular. It is felt that there is great merit in visiting them: in earlier times (and often even today) the hardship of the journey was a form of austerity teaching endurance and control of the body. The religious atmosphere and the knowledge that here one is at the very place trodden by the great figures of earlier times and by countless Jain pilgrims inspire feelings of awe and reverence.

The pilgrims who make their way to the sacred places may be monks or nuns who travel, sometimes over long distances, on foot (the likelihood of crushing small creatures beneath the wheels, or otherwise harming them, means that monks and nuns must not travel by car or other conveyance), or solitary lay individuals, or families or large organized groups. For some the journey may mean real hardship and often well-to-do people undertake the praiseworthy task of helping others to go on pilgrimage. Sometimes a wealthy Jain will organize a major pilgrim 'caravan'. A pilgrimage led by a prominent businessman of Ahmedabad some fifty years ago involved nearly 15,000 people with four hundred monks and seven hundred nuns. Five hundred helpers, cooks and watchmen looked after them as they traveled by slow stages, mostly walking but some riding on horseback or in a hundred motor cars, to Girnar (where the twenty-second Tirthankara achieved moksa) and to the great collection of temples at Satrunjaya. Thirteen hundred bullock carts, as well as lorries, transported tents, cooking equipment and the pilgrims' baggage. When they camped at night the rows of tents, the bustle and lights, the women performing religious dances and songs, gave the impression of a small town. Nowadays, of course, some large groups of pilgrims travel by modern transport (the discomfort may be less but the pious intention is the same and it is still the practice for wealthy Jains to organize and finance them) but large assemblies of pilgrims, a thousand or more at a time, still make the sacred journey on foot, as do lone individuals as well.

Most of the great pilgrimage sites are distant from the centers of population, almost always on the tops of hills or mountains, and often in surroundings of natural beauty conducive to devotion and meditation.

Jain temples throughout India are noted for their cleanliness and sacred atmosphere. The worshipper enters in a state of reverence with mind and spirit prepared, and with clothes and person clean. Shoes are removed, outside impediment like sticks and umbrellas are left

behind. No worldly activities take place within the temple, no sleeping or sitting in casual conversation. The architecture and carving are often equal to any that India, a land of splendid sculpture and temple architecture, can show. The focus is on the image of the Tirthankara, represented seated or standing, in deep meditation with the eyes directed to the tip of the nose, the expression solemn but tranquil. The image is naked, or wearing at most a single cloth, indicating renunciation of worldly things, but is often marked on the breast with a diamond-shaped figure. The Svetambara frequently adorn the image with jewels but in a Digambara shrine it will be left unadorned. A richly carved surround will set off the simple figure, perhaps with elephants, other animal, bird or human figures and celestial attendants. Each Tirthankara has a distinctive sign, a bull for Rsabha, a lion for Mahavira and so on, which is depicted on the pedestal. The twenty-third Tirthankara, Parsva, is shown with a canopy of seven hooded snakes. In a place frequented by pilgrims simple hostel accommodation will be provided free of charge, though it is customary for worshippers to leave a gift of money for the temple upkeep, according to their means.

Of the great number of places of Jain pilgrimage, one which is of unequalled sanctity is Mount Parsvanatha, or SAMETSIKHARA, in Bihar, for it is believed that here no fewer than twenty of the twenty-four Tirthankara left their last earthly bodies and achieved moksa. The mountain rises handsomely from forested lower slopes to its rugged peak and the summit is covered with temples. As they exist today the temples are all relatively modern, the finest one, on the south-east, with its five fluted domes, contains an image in black marble of Parsva, the twenty-third Tirthankara, dated 1765 on its base. Large numbers of pilgrims come to this place, the most pious, after visiting every shrine, conclude their pilgrimage by walking the thirty-mile circuit of the base of the hill

From Sametsikhara the pilgrim may well go on to PAVAPURI, also in Bihar. It is a place of great scenic beauty, particularly when the lotus flowers are in bloom on the large lake. The lake, so the story goes, was formed over many centuries by countless pilgrims taking up a pinch of dust to mark their foreheads. For this is holy ground, a temple stands at the place where Mahavira is reputed to have achieved moksa, and another at the site where his body was cremated. The latter is on an island in the lake, connected by a causeway with the shore, and the gleaming structure, reflected in the lotus-strewn waters, is a splendid sight. Both temples have been considerably renovated over the years. The festival of Diwali, the annual remembrance of Mahavira's nirvana, is, of course, celebrated here with great ceremony.

If the ancient Magadha state, modern Bihar, was the cradle of Jainism, the community is nowadays strongest in western India. Rajasthan and Gujarat are particularly rich in Jain temples and places of pilgrimage. Seven hundred years ago it is recorded that there were over three hundred temples in western India, two hundred of them in Gujarat.

In Rajasthan, JESALMIR has long attracted scholars to its famous library of Jain manuscripts and many thousands of religious books. Not only scholars, but also many other Jains make the pilgrimage to the splendid intricately carved temples of yellow stone. RANAKPUR is also in Rajasthan. The magnificent temple, or temple complex, dates from the fifteenth century. It covers 40,000 square feet on a lofty base, surrounded, as is common with Jain temples, by a high wall. Following a not-uncommon Jain style, the main sanctuary has four six-foot white marble statues of Rsabha, the first Tirthankara, facing the four directions, so the complex plan of the temple provides four approaches. Innumerable pillars, said to be 1444, richly carved and all different, provide unending vistas through the twenty-nine halls, interrupted by open courts. In the thirteenth century A.D. the Jain king of Gujarat, Kumarapala, founded a temple at TARANGA. After his successor reacted against Jainism the temple came to be largely destroyed but it was renovated much later in the reign of the Mogul emperor Akbar in the sixteenth century. It is picturesquely situated on the top of a hill with a difficult approach testing the endurance of pilgrims.

Undoubtedly the masterpieces of Jain architecture, and almost unrivaled in India for beauty and delicacy of carving, are the magnificent DELWARA temples on MOUNTABU in Rajasthan. The carving of the white marble is so delicate that it is almost translucent: the masons scraped away the marble rather than chiseled it and are said to have been paid according to the weight of marble dust removed. The transport alone of the blocks of stone from far away must have been very laborious and expensive. There are two major temple complexes. One was built around 1030 A.D. by Vimala Shah, a wealthy merchant, and dedicated to the first Tirthankara:

it was restored in 1322. The forty-eight pillars of the main hall are probably unequalled anywhere for their decoration; the dome of eleven rings, alternate ones of which are decorated with human and animal figures, is impressive. The later temple, dedicated to the Tirthankara Neminatha, is the larger, 155 feet long. It was founded around 1230 by Tejapala, who with his brother Vastupala, prime minister to the regent of Gujarat, was responsible for more than fifty religious edifices, including foundations at Satrunjaya and Girnar. Each temple complex stands in a rectangular walled area decorated with statues in niches around the circumference. Not only the temples but also the splendid panoramic view from 4000 feet above sea level make this site a remarkable showpiece as well as a place of deep religious significance.

Two places of pilgrimage in Gujarat, GIRNAR and SATRUNJAYA, are so rich in temples and shrines that they have been described as temple cities. GIRNAR is celebrated as the place where the Tirthankara Neminatha achieved moksa. One famous temple at the top of Mount Girnar is over a thousand years old: an inscription is to be found there recording that it was repaired in 1278 A.D. The temple is in a rectangular courtyard surrounded by some seventy Tirthankara images. This is the largest temple but there are many others, including one founded by Vastupala in 1231 A.D. and dedicated to the nineteenth Tirthankara, Mallinatha.

SATRUNJAYA is an ancient Jain place of pilgrimage as it was here that the first Tirthankara, Rsabha, as well as his chief follower, is said to have reached moksa. Many hundreds of temples and smaller shrines are contained within the nine walled enclosures. Although most of them are modern, dating for the great part from the nineteenth century, there is a long history to the site and traditional accounts speak of sixteen restorations going back into far antiquity. A new temple of Rsabha replaced the old one in the mid-twelfth century and seven shrines were placed in front of it in 1231 by Vastupala. Some of the temples can trace their origins, if not their present form, back to the tenth century. Unfortunately Satrunjaya suffered much destruction during the Muslim conquests in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but rebuilding took place after 1500 and in 1582 the Emperor Akbar formally conveyed to the Jains the land which they occupied here. Some of the larger temples are truly magnificent with their high sugar loaf shaped domes or spires, a typical feature of Jain temple architecture, whilst the smaller ones have often a simple and impressive intimacy. Temple building has not ceased and a new temple complex constructed in the 1970s can bear comparison with the earlier ones. Rich ornamentation and statuary abound and demonstrate the skill of the stone carvers. From the late seventeenth century Satrunjaya became more and more important. As pilgrims flocked here guide books were written for them, detailing the routes by which the pious pilgrim may visit and pray before the many images. On a certain date every year pilgrims to the number of nearly 20,000 undertake a twelve-mile round trip: the hardship is great but the bliss experienced makes it well worthwhile. For the very hardy a twenty-four mile route can be walked. Special ceremonies are held on a number of dates in the year. Certain prayers, remembrances and rituals are laid down for the pilgrim. Great merit is achieved by the pilgrimage to Satrunjaya, by fasting and worshipping there (or even by the attempt to get there if one does not reach it), greater merit, it is said, than at many of the other great places of Jain pilgrimage.

The places which we have mentioned are all in the northern half of India but south India has its great pilgrimage centers as well. The most famous is SRAVANA BELGOLA, sixty-two miles from Mysore. Here on a hill 470 feet above the plain, and reached by nearly five hundred steps, stands the colossal statue of Bahubali, fifty-seven feet high, twenty-six feet across the shoulders, cut from solid rock around the year 980 A.D., with a surrounding cloister added in 1116. It is the biggest free-standing monolithic statue in the world. Bahubali, or Gommata, was the son of Rsabha, the first Tirthankara. It is said that he stood so deep in meditation that the climbing plants grew over him. The statue represents him nude, evidence of total renunciation of worldly goods, with his limbs entwined by creepers. There are other statues of Bahubali in south India but this is by far the largest and it is a major center of pilgrimage for Jains from north as well as south India. In a Jain temple the consecrated image is ritually bathed every day as part of the worship paid to it. The statue at Sravana Belgola is so huge that this ritual can be carried out only on the feet of the image. At certain intervals however, of between twelve and fifteen years, a great structure of scaffolding is erected and the image is ceremonially showered from pots of water mixed with sandalwood, coconut and sugar. Half a million people attended the ceremony when it was held in 1967. When it was held again in 1981 it had a special significance as marking the thousandth anniversary of the consecration of the statue.

Pilgrimage to sacred places is part of the tradition of practically every religion in the world. The hardships of the journey discipline the body, the company of fellow pilgrims strengthens religious faith. To pray and worship at a site made holy by tradition or consecration or the worship of generations of the faithful, to stand at the place where great religious leaders and saints once stood, all these are inspiring and uplifting. The soul receives merit, the mind receives peace. By different people a pilgrimage will be interpreted differently. Some simple people are content to lose themselves in the awe of the occasion, to follow without taxing thought the rituals and prayers. Others may wish to take a more intellectual view, to dismiss the more miraculous legends, or at least to see them as pious and educative stories, rather than as literal truth. But few indeed can undertake a journey to the sacred places and come away unmoved.

Pilgrimages and temples are a living part of Jain religion, not some moribund tradition of the past. In Leicester, in England, a new temple is being constructed with, for the first time in the Western world, fully consecrated images of the Tirthankara. They will be housed in a splendid carved stone shrine inside the Jain Center. This work is being made possible by the contributions of Jains from all over the world, to provide a focus for pilgrims who will come to pray before the three images of Shantinatha, Parsva and Mahavira, from Britain, from Europe, from India, and indeed from all parts of the world.

JAINISM AND OTHER RELIGIONS

There are two great religious traditions in the world (which is not to say that there are not a number of important religious traditions outside the two). They are, first the Indian tradition, and, second, the Western. The Indian tradition comprises the whole range of the religious experience of India over the past 3000 years. This includes, of course, Hinduism, a single name to cover an immense spectrum of religious belief and practice. In addition, the Indian tradition gave birth to Buddhism. Jainism, of course, belongs within the Indian tradition. In the West the scene is dominated by Judaism, Christianity and Islam, three religions which have close (though not always harmonious) links, and which trace their origins back to the ancient Middle East.

Before we look at the various religions individually the differences between the two traditions must be noted. Deeply rooted in India is the belief in reincarnation, that belief that the essential part of the individual, the soul, passes after death into a new body which is reborn as another living being, perhaps human, perhaps not. Thus we all pass, through almost endless ages, from one form of life to another, the nature of our rebirth (including whether it is favorable or unfavorable) being determined by the accumulated effects of our actions, our attitudes, our mode of life, in previous lifetimes. The accumulated effect of previous lives is called karma. We cannot escape it and we are not free of it until each unit, so to speak, of our karma has worked itself out in subsequent lives, by which time it has, of course, been replaced by fresh accumulations of the karmic forces.

By contrast the Western religions take the view that we have only one life on earth which leads on to an eternal afterlife, not always clearly defined but involving some idea of reward (heaven) or punishment (hell) for our behavior on earth.

The other fundamental difference between the Western and the Indian traditions lies in the nature of god. To the Muslim, the Christian, the Jew, God is one, a single all-powerful being who created the universe, watches over it, controls it, and may be influenced by the prayers of men and women. Indian thought is not so clear-cut on this issue. To most Indian thinkers the idea of a single god, totally excluding all others, is alien. The universe is often (but not always) seen as self-subsisting, needing no creator nor controller. If, to some schools of thought, god is in some way a unitary force or power, this expresses itself in the many forms of many different gods. Buddhism and Jainism do not accept the idea of god at all, at any rate in a form that would be understood by adherents of other religions: they have even been described as atheistic religions. This is in fact rather an over simplification, as the student of Jainism will appreciate.

Now let us look at the Jain religion in relation to the other major religions. Jainism has, of course, particularly close links with Hinduism. Although the teachings of Mahavira represented a reaction against aspects of the rule of contemporary Hindu religious leaders, yet for 2500 years since Mahavira Jainism has been a living force, preserving the ancient faith without becoming ossified, developing against the background of a predominantly Hindu environment. For most of this period Jains and Hindus have coexisted happily, with mutual tolerance and respect. In many ways the Jain community has been influenced by the customs and traditions of the larger Hindu community. In matters of ritual as well as social customs the influence is plain. Jain worship is directed fundamentally to the Tirthankara, to the liberated and enlightened souls, to religious teachers and monks. Yet some of the gods and goddesses of Hinduism receive, in a different way, respect from many Jains. Lakshmi, the goddess of plenty, Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, are revered in a way which does not seem contradictory to the overriding respect and adoration due to the Tirthankara. Jain influence on Hinduism must include non-violence and vegetarianism. Mahatma Gandhi, as is well-known, was deeply influenced, particularly in his attitude to non-violence by the Jains.

Jainism is often compared with Buddhism, indeed Western scholars in the early nineteenth century often confused the two. Certainly there are similarities. The Buddha and Mahavira were near contemporaries and both reacted against the over-rigid orthodoxy of the scholars of their time. The teachings of both are preserved not in the classical Sanskrit but in the colloquial languages in which they preached. Each laid down a course of training leading to ultimate salvation, moksha or nirvana. Both emphasized non-violence and strongly condemned the killing of living creatures. In both Buddhism and Jainism the order of monks and nuns is important. However the differences between Jainism and Buddhism are considerable. Mahavira, it must be remembered, was bringing new vigor into a religion already ancient in his day. The Buddha was the founder of a new religion. The course of spiritual training of the Jains lays much more emphasis on austerity and rigorous self-discipline than the 'middle way' between ease and austerity in Buddhism. The great philosophers of Jainism have evolved a view of the universe as material and permanent, in strong contrast to the Buddhist view that everything is illusory and transient. Illusory and transient even is the individual soul: to the Buddhist nirvana or moksha means the merging or extinction of individuality in an undifferentiated final state, whilst to the Jain it is a liberation of the soul into an individual state of total knowledge and bliss.

Christianity and Judaism share a common religious heritage for the early leaders of Christianity were Jews who followed the call of Jesus Christ, himself a Jew. The sacred scriptures of the Jews form the 'Old Testament' of the Christian Bible. Judaism, like Jainism, is both a religion and a community, a close-knit community with a way of life and worship which keeps religion in a central place in society. Unlike Jainism the religion of Judaism centers around the worship of a single all-powerful creator God. The code of right and wrong is strict but Judaism pays less attention to life after death than almost any other religion.

To the Christians also God is one (though seen in a mysterious way as having three aspects). Right conduct is all-important, non-violence expressed as turning the other cheek when an enemy strikes you, summed up in love for one's fellow men and women, and this brings its reward after death in Heaven where the individual soul passes eternity in the bliss of the presence of God. One Christian writer on Jainism, though admiring much of the Jain faith, felt strongly the lack of a personal god, a refuge in time of trouble. Yet this is seen by others as a strength of Jainism: the individual feels master of his fate, not a dependent suppliant.

Islam is the newest of the three great monotheistic religions; Here we see the power and unity of God expressed in the strongest terms. To associate any other being with God is the worst kind of heresy. The moral code is strict and in its most fundamental form Islam lays down rules for every aspect of human life. Islam does not shun the world, rather rejoices in it as God's creation, but a paradise of unimagined bliss awaits the faithful beyond death.

Are all religions equally true? That is a difficult question. There are people who hold, passionately, that they only have the truth and everybody else is wrong. At the other extreme others distort the teachings of different religions in an attempt to show that they all mean the same thing. Where should a Jain stand? Obviously a convinced Jain will feel that the teachings of Mahavira, as they have been interpreted and developed over the past 2500 years, form the outstanding guide to the nature of life and the universe and to the conduct which

leads to ultimate freedom. But a fundamental Jain belief is *anekantavada*, that truth may be seen in different ways from different viewpoints. So, to the Jain, confidence should not lead to intolerance but to a sympathetic respect for the ways in which followers of other faiths make their own approaches to truth.

CONCLUSION:

On Being a Jain in the Modern World

In these chapters we have looked at Jainism in various aspects. The aim has been to present Jainism to the Jain and non-Jain alike, as a sensible rational way of explaining life and the universe, with a course of behaviour and action which can lead the individual ultimately, in the long term, to the highest goal, and which, in the short term, provides a guide to living a moral and satisfying life in modern society. This has been set within the general context of Jain history and the Jain way of life. In this short conclusion we shall look at the way in which the Jain will draw together the sometimes conflicting demands of religion and his or her daily life in the modern world.

There are five great moral precepts. The first of these, and by far the most important, is non-violence, *ahimsa*. Perhaps 'harmlessness' would be a better translation. We cannot avoid harm to other living creatures in the course of daily life, but it is possible to keep one's mind alert to the possibility of harm so that it can be avoided whenever possible. Should we use antibiotics which destroy tiny forms of life, or insecticides? Can we morally take part in, or support, war? Any individual will find himself or herself faced by many problems of this nature to which there is not always a clear answer. These problems may, and should, give rise to deep thought and, when harm seems unavoidable, true regret. For *ahimsa* is expressed not only in outward action but also in inward attitudes of mind. A lay person cannot avoid all harm but can act with caution to minimize it, and with true sorrow and regret.

Truthfulness, the second precept, should be seen not just as a concern for accuracy but as avoidance of all those forms of untruth, such as slander or cheating, which harm others. Avoidance of stealing seems perhaps the easiest virtue for we all like to feel that we are not thieves. But here again modern society offers us so many possibilities on the fringe of theft, tax evasion, fiddling expenses, keeping lost property.

Sexual restraint is a deeply personal matter and we shall not add to the great volume of advice and exhortation from different quarters available today. However we should link this with the last of the five moral precepts, non-acquisitiveness. It will be very clear that, next to violence, the passions of desire for the things of this world, of whatever kind, form the greatest obstacle to peace of mind and spiritual progress. Modern society is an acquisitive society. Modern economics depend on creating the desire for more and more possessions in all of us. Once again the individual is faced with many and deep problems over the extent to which he or she should give in. Restraint is a force for harmony in family and society. A Jain should leave some of his income over to give to worthy causes, writers have suggested 25% from the most generous but realize that 10% or even 6% may be the average. For some this may mean real hardship but we should consider seriously whether some of the 'necessities' of modern life are really all that necessary after all. Charity performed, not for the sake of glory but out of true concern for the cause to which it is devoted, is most meritorious. If other people wish to praise the donor, he or she should accept the praise with all humility and with a feeling of gratitude that it has been possible to perform an act of merit.

Some people would hold that any person who follows a way of life based on these principles can be regarded as a Jain. However religion is not just about good behaviour: Right Conduct in the Jain sense cannot be achieved without Right Knowledge and Right Faith. It may seem that knowledge is easier to acquire nowadays than ever before in the history of Jainism. Books and journals are available nowadays to the layman or woman, not as easily as they should be but certainly more readily than at any time in the past. There are many Jain associations in India, and some overseas (including Jain Samaj Europe), which are concerned with the dissemination of knowledge about Jainism to Jains and non-Jains. Formal study is one way of acquiring knowledge (and certainly helps with the question which most Jains hear at some time

'You're a Jain aren't you? What exactly does that mean?') but for many people conversation between friends on the serious matters of religion is almost equally important. There is now a fairly general revival of interest in religion and in many countries this is being spearheaded by young people. It is hoped that quite a lot of young people will read this book and that it may provide help in bringing Jainism into focus in the modern world.

Right faith is the most difficult. Knowledge can be acquired, conduct can be adapted, but nobody can force true inner belief on you. The Jain in the modern world should try to spend some time in meditation, that is quiet undisturbed thought. He or she should think deeply about the actual meaning behind the rituals and practices of religion, to see that they are not just archaic play-acting but permanent and abiding means of helping the individual, of explaining to the individual in the nature and importance of the Jain religion.

Nobody is going to make a fortune out of religion: few people could even make a living out of it. We all have our worldly affairs to look after, career, ambition, family, entertainment, home, social life. Religion can easily get crowded out. The modern Jain, however, has something which gives an assurance of his or her place in the world, in time, in the whole scheme of things. It gives a guide to the way to live, and it can give the greatest benefit of all, inner happiness and peace of mind.

APPENDIX

A Note on the Jain Sacred Literature

The sacred scriptures of the Jains are of great antiquity and scholars are not certain about their dates and mode of compilation. Originally there were sixty texts, comprised in three groups known as the Purva, Anga and Angabahya. Forty-five texts survive to this day, the fourteen Purva texts and the twelfth Anga (which is believed to have contained a summary of the Purva) having been lost. The Purva texts are said to go back to the time of Parsva, 250 years before Mahavira. From references to them in other works it appears that they contained arguments to refute the beliefs of their opponents, as well as Jain beliefs on astronomy and the nature of the universe, esoteric matter on astrology and the achievement of occult powers, discussion on the soul and its bondage by matter and karma. The (now-lost) twelfth Anga contained five sections, giving, it is believed, the main teachings of the Purva texts, and including traditional history down to Mahavira which formed the basis of later writings.

Passed down by word of mouth by many generations of monks, the final written version of the scriptures is believed to have been put together at the council of Valabhi in 450 A.D. They are written in Ardhamagadhi, a Prakrit or popular spoken language (as distinct from Sanskrit, the learned literary language of India) and contain a variety of matters relating to Jain doctrine, the Jain way of life, regulations for monks and nuns and stories illustrating moral and religious questions. The Anga texts (the word 'anga' means a limb, i.e. a part of the canon) form the oldest surviving group of the generally accepted sacred literature. The actual process of compilation of these eleven texts as we have them today is still a matter of research for scholars but they undoubtedly incorporate much very ancient material. The Angabahya is a collective name for the remaining texts of the canon, which are regarded as subsidiary to the Anga. The thirty-four texts comprise the Upanga (twelve in number), Chedasutra (six), Prakirna (ten), Mulasutra (four) and two independent Chulikasutra texts. Whilst the Svetambara accept the Anga and Angabahya texts as the sacred canon, the Digambara tradition is different.

Apart from these scriptures Jain monk-scholars were later to produce an enormous amount of writing known as Expositions (Anuyoga). These writings, by both Svetambara and Digambara writers, may be classified into four groups, comprising respectively biographical, scientific, disciplinary and philosophical works. They range in date from the first century A.D. through medieval times, and indeed later. Amongst the Svetambara may be mentioned Haribhadra (eighth century A.D.), Hemacandra (twelfth century) and Yasovijaya (seventeenth century). Kunda-Kunda (perhaps second century), Jinasena (ninth century) and Somadeva (tenth century) may be mentioned as representative Digambara writers. Biographical details of Kunda-Kunda are obscure but amongst his writings the Samayasara, an important

philosophical treatise dealing with the nature of the soul (jiva), is widely-read. Whilst Kunda-Kunda wrote in Prakrit, the author of the famous Tattvarthasutra, Umasvati, used the scholarly Sanskrit. This work is an epitome of Jain doctrine in 357 verses. Haribhadra's Dharmabindu is a well-known manual of morals and asceticism. One of the most popular Jain sacred texts is the Kalpa Sutra, a very ancient work which gives biographies of the twenty-four Tirthankara, the succession of Jain pontiffs for many generations and rules for the life of monks during the rainy season. It is widely read during Paryusana and heard with devotion by the people.

Jain monk-poets wrote hymns of praise to the Tirthankara, poems glorifying Jain doctrine and conduct, and made an important contribution in basic recitations used in worship by the people. The preachers used the languages of the masses in an instructive and entertaining way and, apart from Prakrit and Sanskrit, Jain literature is found in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marathi and other Indian languages. Recently Jain scholars have started translating their sacred literature into English (a process begun by European scholars in the nineteenth century) to make it available to scholars and others in the West.

The twenty-four Tirthankara of the Present Half-cycle of Time

Images of the Tirthankara may be identified by the emblems usually depicted on the pedestal: these are noted below. Parsva is depicted with a canopy of seven hooded snakes above his head, Suparsva has a similar canopy usually of five or nine, but not seven, snakes. According to tradition Malli, the nineteenth Tirthankara, was a woman but this is not universally accepted. The suffix-natha is often added to the names of most of the Tirthankara.

1. Rsabha or Adinatha (bull)
2. Ajita (elephant)
3. Sambhava (horse)
4. Abhinandana (ape)
5. Sumati (a bird, described as curlew, partridge or red goose)
6. Padmaprabha (lotus)
7. Suparsva (swastika)
8. Chandraprabha (moon)
9. Suvidhi or Puspadanta (crocodile, sometimes dolphin or crab)
10. Sitala (four-petalled emblem)
11. Sreyamsa (rhinoceros)
12. Vasupujya (buffalo)
13. Vimala (boar)
14. Ananta (hawk or bear)
15. Dharma (thunderbolt)
16. Shanti (deer)
17. Kunthu (goat)
18. Ara (elaborated swastika, or fish)
19. Malli (water jar)
20. Munisuvrata (tortoise)
21. Nami (blue lotus)
22. Nemi or Aristanemi (conch shell)
23. Parsva (snake)
24. Mahavira (lion)

The Jain Calendar

The regular festivals of the Jain year follow the traditional Indian calendar so the dates vary somewhat from year to year in the European calendar. Each Indian month is divided into the bright half (when the moon is waxing) and the dark half, and the days are numbered within each half-month. The Indian months are given below alongside the European months within which they fall. The year is often given according to the Vikram Samvat era which commenced in 57 B.C. (abbreviated V.S.) or, in Jain circles, according to the Ira Nirvana Samvat, commencing with Mahavira's nirvana in 527 B.C. It must be remembered that the Indian New Year falls around October in the European calendar.

The table below shows the more important dates in the Jain calendar. Jains also remember the five great events in the life of each Tirthankara (conception, birth, renunciation, omniscience, moksa). These occasions are kept as days of fasting, semi-fasting or other religious activities. Although more than one commemoration may fall on the same day, they are too numerous to have been included here. In addition, pious Jains fast partially or totally on the 2nd., 8th., 14th., and 15th. day of each half-month, or engage in other religious activities.

Jain Festivals And Holy Days

Indian month	Falling within European months	Bright or Dark half	Day	Festival

Karttika omniscience; year for Jain	Oct/Nov	Br	1	New Year (Gautama's Start of accounting businessmen)
		Br	5	Jnana Pancham (adoration of knowledge)
and		Br	8-15	Karttiki Atthai (eight-day fasting worship, particularly of the siddhachakra)
(marked repentance, ritual)		Br	14	Four-monthly Chaturdashi by pratikraman,
rainy move out. Satrunjay resumes discontinued during season. *		Br	15	End of Chaturmas, four month season retreat: monks Pilgrimage to after being rainy
		Dk	10	Mahavira's Renunciation
Margasirsa	Nov/Dec	Br	11	Maunagiyaras (day of silence)
Pausa	Dec/Jan	Dk	13	Rsabha's Moksa
Magha	Jan/Feb	Within this month 15 days are devoted to 19 great events relating to 14 Tirthankara		
Phalgun	Feb/Mar	Br	8-15	Phalguni Atthai (eight day fasting and worship)
		Br	14	Four-monthly Chaturdashi
Caitra	Mar/Apr	Br	7-15	Oli(nine-daysemi-fast)
		Br	13	Mahavira Jayanti (Birth of Mahavira)
to		Br	15	An important date for pilgrimage Satrunjay*
Vaisakh his	Apr/May	Br	3	Aksaya Trutiya (Rsabha broke one-year fast with sugar)

cane juice
devotees do the same)

and modern

		Br	10	Mahavira's Omniscience
		Dk	13	Shantinatha's Birth and Moksa
		Dk	14	Shantinatha's Renunciation
Jyaistha are	May/Jun	Within this month 7 great events relating to 6 Tirthankara celebrated		
Asadha	Jun/Jul	Br	6	Mahavira's Conception
		Br	8-15	Asadhi Atthai (eight-day fasting and worship)
		Br	14	Four-monthly Chaturdashi
Sravana Paryusana	Jul/Aug	Dk	12	Beginning of eight-day (Svetambara)
Mahavira Sutra		Dk	15	Public reading of life of from the Kalpa
Bhadrapada from	Aug/Sept	Br	1	Reading of Mahavira's birth the Kalpa Sutra
Paryusana, annual forgiveness)		Br	4	Samvatsari (last day of nearly all Jains fast, confession and
		Br	5-14	Paryusana (Digambara)
Asvina	Sept/Oct	Br	7-15	Oli (nine-day semi-fast)
		Dk	14	Roopa Chaturdashi (or Chhoti Diwali) (followers came for sight of Mahavira as he commenced his last
last sermon)		Dk	15	Diwali (Mahavira's Moksa: of Mahavira in the illumination at the light of
worship morning general night to symbolize knowledge)				

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GLOSSARY

These words are, of course, normally written in Indian scripts so different spellings can be found when they are converted into the Roman alphabet. Some variants are shown in brackets. In particular the final -a (which is often not pronounced) is often omitted, c is pronounced ch and often written thus, s may stand for the English s or sh sounds.

Acharya: leader of a community of monks

Ahimsa: non-violence

Ajiva: non-living substance

Anekantavada: the view of non-one-sidedness

Anga: sacred scriptures of the Jains arati

Aarti: ceremony of waving lamps

Ardhamagadhi: the Prakrit language in which the Jain scriptures and prayers are written

Arhat (arihanta): an enlightened soul, one who has reached the last stage before final liberation

Arihanta Puja: a form of worship praising the arhat and other beings

Asrava: inflow of karma into the soul

Bandha: binding of karma to the soul

Brahmin: the priestly caste in Indian society

Chaitya Vandana: temple prayers

Chaturyama dharma: the 'fourfold teaching' of the twenty- third Tirthankara, abstention from violence, untruth, stealing and acquisitiveness

Dhyana: deep meditation Digambara: 'sky-clad', one of the two major sects of Jainism (see 'Svetambara')Diksa (diksha): initiation of a monk

Dipa: a lamp

Diwali: Indian festival, kept by the Jains in remembrance of Mahavira's moksa

Ganadhara: the eleven immediate followers of Mahavira Gunasthana: the fourteen stages on the ladder of spiritual progress

Guru: a teacher, particularly a monk's master in the religious order

Jai Jinendra: honor to the supreme Jina (Jain greeting) Jina:one who has conquered (the passions), usually referring to a Tirthankara

Jiva: Living being, soul

Jnana Pancham: fifth day of the year, the day of knowledge Kalpa Sutra: a popular Jain sacred scripture

Karma: actions, the instrument by which previous actions take effect on the individual's soul and life

Keval jnana: total knowledge, omniscience

Ksatriya: the knightly caste in Indian society

Mahavira Jayanti: annual festival celebrating Mahavira's birth

Maunagiyaras: annual day of silence and fasting

Moguls (Mughals): rulers of the Muslim empire in India (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries A.D.)

Moksa (moksha): final liberation, nirvana

Muni: a monk

Namaskara Mantra: see 'Panca Namaskara'

Namo: I bow to...

Nigoda: very tiny living beings

Nirjara: shedding of karma from the soul

Nirvana: final liberation, moksa

Nisihi: utterance on entering temple to indicate abandonment of worldly thoughts

Oli: nine-day semi-fast kept twice a year

Panca Namaskara (Panch Namaskara)

or Namaskara Mantra: formula of obeisance to the five categories of superior beings
Papa: demerit, bad results in karma
Paryusana (Paryushan): annual eight-day period of fasting and religious activities
Prakrit: ancient colloquial languages of India, no longer spoken, including Ardha Magadhi
Pratikramana: ritual of repentance
Pudgala: matter, non-living material substance
Puja: worship
Punya: merit, good results in karma
Purva: lost scriptures of the Jains
Ratnatraya: the Three Jewels, Right Faith, Knowledge and Conduct
Sadhu: a monk
Sadhvi: a nun
Sallekhana: accepting death by ceasing to take food
Samayika: equanimity achieved through meditation and prayer Samvara: cessation of influx of karma into the soul
Sanskrit: the classical learned language of India
Shramana/shramani: monk/nun of the Terapanthi sect who has taken partial vows only
Siddha: a totally liberated soul
Siddhacakra: metal disc with sacred images
Snatra Puja: ritual of bathing the Jina image
Sravaka: lay man
Sravika: lay woman
Sthanakvasi: sect of Jains who do not worship images
Sutra: a religious text
Svetambara: 'white-clad', one of the two major sects of Jainism (see 'Digambara')
Syadvada: the assertion that 'in some respects' a fact is true (but in other respects it may not be)
Swastika: ancient Indian auspicious symbol
Tapas (tapa): austerity
Terapanthi: non-image-worshipping sect which developed out of the Sthanakvasi in the eighteenth century
Tirthankara: the twenty-four enlightened souls in each half- cycle of time who are the 'prophets' or teachers of Jainism
Upadhyaya: preceptor or teacher of monks
Upasraya: meditation hall